

# U.S.I. JOURNAL

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OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2000

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## From the Director's Desk

**T**he year 2000 has indeed been a most eventful one for the USI. The entry into the new millennium has been marked by a rapidly growing membership, which had crossed 8000 by end November. The satisfying feature is the increasing interest being taken in the activities of the Institution by serving personnel, including the younger generation; this category now comprises two thirds of the current membership. Research projects undertaken are finding increased participation by serving members; and these, when completed, are now being put out under the aegis of established publishing houses. Two major new areas of activity have recently been approved by the USI Council. A Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research is in the process of being set up, as also a Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping.

There is much interest from various institutions both at the national level as also internationally, to interact with the USI or co-sponsor activities with us. In pursuance of such activity, a group of six USI members attended a conference at the National Centre for Middle East Studies in Cairo in May 2000; it is intended to host a reciprocal conference with members of that Institution at the USI in September/October 2001. The China Institute for Strategic Studies, Beijing has evinced interest in sending a group of scholars for interaction with the USI; we have suggested dates in March 2001 for the purpose. An international UN peacekeeping seminar attended by about 30 representatives from abroad, and a large number of our personnel, was conducted at the Institution in mid September 2000; it turned out to be a great success. Under consideration are approaches made by the International Committee of the Red Cross for a regional workshop, UN AIDS Programme for a regional conference, and a bilateral meeting on peacekeeping by the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defence University, Washington.

Correspondence courses in preparation for the various promotion examinations and the entrance examinations for the Defence Services Staff College and the Technical Staff College,

continue to be well received by our young uniformed members. The results achieved by those who subscribe to these courses have been most satisfying; a tribute as much to the Directing Staff, as to the efforts of the officers themselves. At the request of the Directorate General of Military Training, and in order to reduce the commitments on serving officers, evaluation of papers for Promotion Examinations Parts 'B' and 'D' was carried out under the aegis of the USI. This was undertaken utilising the spontaneously rendered services of volunteers from the retired fraternity and some serving officers on leave. It turned out to be a most satisfying endeavour in particular context of the fact that the retired officers felt they were able to contribute while also having an opportunity to remain in touch with what was going on in the Service.

Automation of the Colonel Pyara Lal Memorial Library has been undertaken and it is proposed to speed up the process by awarding the project to a professional organisation on a turn-key basis. A new web site for the USI is being set up under the domain name 'usiofindia.org'; it is proposed to include all details about the Institution, together with the schedule of proposed activities, correspondence courses, research projects, articles in the USI Journal, lists of various research papers, and so on at the site.

With all these efforts, it is intended that the USI enters the new millennium fully equipped to meet the aspirations of its members.

***"Best Wishes to all our members for a very Happy New Year"***

## EDITORIAL

The lead article in this issue has been excerpted from the Field Marshal KM Cariappa Memorial Lecture delivered by Shri K Subrahmanyam on 28 October 2000 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on "Challenges to Indian Security". The author has taken pains to identify the challenges in a comprehensive manner and has also suggested ways and means for dealing with them. The biggest challenge pertains to our attitude towards national security. Corruption and misgovernance are national security threats and these need to be addressed expeditiously. Our borders are porous, and drugs, arms, terrorists, fake currency and illegal immigrants are able to pass through. India has become a nuclear power and should project a credible deterrence; for this a robust C<sup>4</sup>I<sup>2</sup> system and a clear political and military succession mechanism are essential ingredients, which must be accorded priority. The National Security Council (NSC) though established, has not been fully functional due to various reasons. It needs to be strengthened and made to work in the interest of National Security.

Consequent to review of the Kargil Committee Report, a task force for management of defence was set up. It is understood that the Task Force has strongly recommended the creation of the post of the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) as its preferred option. An article titled 'The Role of the Chief of Defence Staff', by Col PK Vasudeva focuses on this important aspect. Unlike the present arrangement with three Chiefs of equal rank, the CDS will be the senior most officer in the military hierarchy and will represent the three Services jointly. The arrangement aims at promoting efficiency and optimising the use of resources with the three Services to achieve national objectives.

Ever since 1984, the Glaciers region in Northern Jammu and Kashmir is witness to a stand-off between Indian and

Pakistani military forces. The aggression in Kargil by Pakistan on a 110 kms frontage overlooking the Srinagar-Leh Highway in May-August 1999 added a new dimension to the conflict in the area. An article titled 'Siachen After Kargil (Part-1)' by Lt Gen M Thomas focuses on the historical background, strategic importance and the military issues involved in Siachen region. The operations in the glaciers are being fought on the 'highest battlefield in the world' at ill-affordable financial costs to both sides. With the passage of time the issue has become very complex. A solution to the problem may emerge as and when the problem of the Jammu and Kashmir is finally resolved.

## Challenges to Indian Security

K SUBRAHMANYAM

It is indeed a great honour and privilege to be asked to deliver this memorial lecture to recall the services of the first Indian Chief of Army Staff. The story I cherish most about General Cariappa, as he was then, was his encounter with Mahatma Gandhi. While undergoing the course at the Imperial Defence College in London as Major General in early 1947, General Cariappa was quoted as saying that Jawaharlal Nehru and Jinnah should meet to work out a solution without partitioning India and in any event division of the Indian Army should be averted. Gandhiji criticised him, for a military man expressing views on politics, in his weekly column in *The Harijan*. When General Cariappa returned to India, he called on Gandhiji who was staying in the Bhangi colony in Delhi. After some polite conversation, General Cariappa came to the point. He said: "I cannot do my duty well by the country if I concentrate only on telling troops of nonviolence, all the time, subordinating their main task of preparing themselves efficiently to be good soldiers. So I ask you, please, to give me the child's guide to knowledge— tell me please, how can I put this over, that is, the spirit of nonviolence to the troops without endangering their sense of duty to train themselves well professionally as soldiers." Gandhiji replied: "you have asked me to tell you in tangible and concrete form how you can put over to the troops the need for nonviolence. I am still groping in the dark for the answer. I will find it and give it to you some day."

This was the honest answer of the apostle of non-violence to the first soldier of Independent India. He did not have an answer on how to defend India using non-violence. This happened in December 1947. Even as Gandhiji was searching for an answer on how to use non-violence in defence, he approved and indeed strongly supported the use of the Indian Army to defend Jammu and Kashmir against Pakistani invasion. Brigadier L P Sen obtained Gandhiji's blessings before flying down to Srinagar to assume command. The Mahatma always maintained that violence was better than cowardice.

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Excerpted from the Field Marshal K M Cariappa Memorial Lecture 2000.

Shri K Subrahmanyam is the Convenor of the National Security Advisory Board.

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Even fifty three years after independence, there is no clear understanding among our leaders, political class, bureaucracy, business establishment and intellectuals about the nature of the security problem India faces. This is illustrated by the fact that though India has declared itself a state with nuclear weapons and the National Security Advisory Board's nuclear doctrine has been publicised, there has been no significant debate on this vital security issue in the country among the political parties and in the parliament. So is the case with the Kargil Review Committee's report. This is the situation after this country has fought five wars. The problem with our country was not the Gandhian approach and values, but our centuries-old indifference to who rules us. There is a well known saying "What does it matter whether Rama or Ravana rules." That was why a few hundred horsemen descending down the Khyber Pass could overrun the subcontinent and the East India Company could use Indians to conquer India. When Queen Victoria issued her proclamation in 1857 it was widely welcomed. Even today the same indifference permits a largely corrupt class to be elected, and deny this country the pace of growth and prosperity it deserves.

Mr Altaf Gauhar, an eminent Pakistani columnist, who was Information Adviser to General Ayub Khan, wrote a series of articles in the Pakistani daily *Nation* in September and October 1999 after the Kargil War under the title "Four wars and one assumption". He argued that Pakistan started all the four wars under one assumption, which was articulated by General Ayub Khan. The latter genuinely believed that "as a general rule Hindu morale would not stand more than a couple of hard blows at the right time and place." Today Pakistani generals write about bleeding India through a thousand cuts. They have been talking about fatigue setting in the Indian Army because of its continuous deployment in counter-terrorist operations and its consequent declining efficiency as a fighting force. Lt Gen Javed Nasir, the former head of the Inter Services Intelligence Wing, wrote in early 1999 that "the Indian Army is incapable of undertaking any conventional operations at present, what to talk of enlarging conventional conflict." It was this mindset which led to the Kargil adventurism.

India has been facing a nuclear threat arising out of China's proliferation of nuclear weapon capability to Pakistan from the mid-

seventies. Even as Prime Minister Morarji Desai renounced India's nuclear weapons option and nuclear testing in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament in June 1978, Pakistan was intensifying its nuclear weapon development effort. In an article published on 5 October 1999 in *News International*, the present Foreign Minister of Pakistan Abdul Sattar, the former Foreign Minister Agha Shahi, and former Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar Ali Khan, have disclosed that Pakistan conceived its nuclear weapons programme in the wake of defeat in the 1971 War and it was India-specific. They also assert that the value of Pakistan's nuclear capability was illustrated on at least three occasions, in the mid-1980s, in 1987 at the time of the Indian Army exercise *Operation Brasstacks*, and in April-May 1990. The Kargil Review Committee report confirms the 1987 threat, officially conveyed to India through Ambassador S K Singh posted in Islamabad, and of fears of possible Pakistani nuclear strike in 1990. Yet the country's media, academia and Parliament have not bothered to discuss the nuclear dimension of the security issue. It would appear that one of the most difficult challenges to Indian security is the general indifference on the part of our elite.

Recently the *Times of India* managed to obtain a copy of the History of 1965 War, compiled by a team of historians commissioned by the Ministry of Defence, and put it on the Internet. Though this history was ready for public release in the late 1980's and the Ministry of Defence and Army Headquarters were keen on releasing it, publication was vetoed by the Committee of Secretaries. This highlighted that among our bureaucracy and political leadership there is not adequate appreciation about using the history of past wars and campaigns and lessons derived from them as learning aids. Even today, 37 years after the report was submitted, the Henderson-Brookes Report is being kept under lock and key. This secrecy is not attributable to concern about national security. It arises out of callous indifference to national security and laziness to go through the original document and decide whether its release would in any way adversely affect our security. The same approach is holding back the release of the history of the 1971 War as well.

Such indifference to history also comes in the way of the

development of correct understanding and appreciation of the adversary's mindset. In the absence of such understanding, assessments of the present and future courses of actions by the adversary military leadership becomes that much more difficult. All this arises out of a non-professional and generalist approach to national security on the part of our political and bureaucratic leadership, with some rare exceptions. The Kargil Review Committee has recommended that the National Security Council, the senior bureaucracy servicing it and the Service Chiefs need to be continually sensitised to assessed intelligence pertaining to national, regional and international security issues and therefore there should be periodic intelligence briefings to the Cabinet Committee on Security with all supporting staff in attendance. There is reluctance both on the part of politicians and bureaucracy to devote time and effort for the purpose. It is considered adequate if people are briefed when the need for it arises.

This attitude is similar to the one exhibited by some political leaders who raised the question of what threat had developed in 1998 to necessitate the nuclear tests. In this approach there is deplorable lack of understanding that the best way of tackling a threat is to anticipate it well in advance and to be well prepared to meet it. Starting preparations to counter a threat after it has materialised is the surest way of inviting disaster. That means there is no understanding of the concept of lead time needed for preparations. This indifference to carry out regular periodic assessments of security threats on the part of our political class and bureaucracy and communicate it to the nation is at the root of the overall insensitivity of our media, academia, parliamentarians and the public at large to problems of national security. This Indian mindset is not a secret from our adversaries. Therefore they cannot be blamed if they attempt to exploit this weakness. When I refer to the bureaucracy, it includes the uniformed community as well.

This tradition of not anticipating the threat in advance and not being prepared to meet it, and to attempt to counter it after it had assumed serious proportions, is what Air Commodore Jasjit Singh calls the "Panipat syndrome". The rulers of Delhi waited till the enemy advanced down to Panipat to give battle. It would seem that the

political and bureaucratic class of independent India had not drawn any lessons from the three Battles of Panipat, let alone the recent wars of 1948, 1965 and 1971.

Yet another serious security challenge this country faces is the tendency of our political class and the media to politicise issues of national security in a partisan manner. In all mature democracies, basic issues of national security are kept above party politics. If there are debates in the US on issues like Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, it is not about national security but about the nature and extent of offensive posture to be adopted to advance American foreign policy interests. In those countries since there are frequent alternating changes of parties in government and opposition, the ruling party generally keeps the opposition informed of major developments in the field of national security. In India this does not happen.

One can understand our Prime Ministers keeping the development of the nuclear weapon a closely guarded secret, not shareable even with their own senior cabinet colleagues. However, when the tests were conducted in May 1998, it was obvious to every well-informed person that while the credit for taking the decision to test should go to the ruling coalition, it could not have developed the weapons in the fifty three days it was in office. That credit should go to those parties which provided the previous Prime Ministers. If only the ruling coalition had displayed enough grace to invite those former Prime Ministers to be present while making the announcement, the nuclear issue would not have created the controversy it did. While the previous Prime Ministers had a compulsion to keep the programme a secret, there was no reason why they could not have educated their party members on the realities of the international nuclear order. Even today no political party leadership exerts itself to educate its members and its second and third rung leaders on international and national security issues. The result was the Congress Party's severe criticism of the nuclear tests when the maximum contribution to the development of nuclear weapons and missiles were made by Prime Ministers belonging to that party.

This politicisation reached its peak during the Kargil conflict and continues to this day with adverse consequences to our national

security. During the previous wars in 1948, 1962, 1965 and 1971, there were failures of intelligence, assessment of intelligence, as well as in policies. There were criticisms of the government of the day by the opposition. Very rarely was the criticism directed against the Army and individual officers, though various known accounts of the campaigns do reveal serious mistakes committed including the dissolution of 4<sup>th</sup> Indian Division at Sela-Bomdila without joining battle. And very rarely one saw the kind of campaign that is now being carried on in certain quarters. In a democracy, the conduct of defence in terms of policy, management and procurement must be subject to criticism. But the degree of personalisation of criticism now being generated cannot be termed as constructive. This, it would appear, is attributable to the politicisation of national security as part of partisan politics. Many of those in the media are committed political activists and therefore their political commitment colours their reporting and comments. The earlier generation of media persons had their political preferences, but were scrupulously objective in their reporting. Perhaps this present phenomenon may prove to be a passing phase. Perhaps it may not.

Indian democracy can accept such criticisms. The only risk is that our adversaries may be misled by them and indulge in adventurism. One may recall that the Nazis were misled by the Oxford Union passing a resolution in the 1930s that they would not fight for King or Country. A few years later many of those Oxford graduates became fighter pilots in the Battle of Britain. Similarly, negative writing in our media might have led Pakistani generals to talk about the fatigued Indian Army and initiate the Kargil adventure. Therefore, without in anyway departing from high democratic norms and abrading the freedom to report, the Government and the Armed Forces have to carefully assess the impact of such reports and to take corrective action where necessary in terms of an information campaign. Transparency is the best policy and strategy. Unfortunately, this is yet to be fully appreciated as is evident from the counter-productive government security deletions in the Kargil Report and holding back the appendices and annexures. Many of them were published documents in this country and in Pakistan.

This is an era of coalition politics and we have a ruling coalition

of over a dozen parties. Many of them are regional parties based on linguistic and even caste and communal considerations. With some rare exceptions, most of the members belonging to these parties are largely interested in local issues affecting their constituencies and not very much in international and national security issues. This is understandable. Some of them become members of Parliamentary Standing Committees on Defence and Foreign affairs. One hopes that it gives them some opportunity to widen their horizons. However, there is no institutionalised mechanism for their being able to acquire more knowledge and background in these fields. Unlike in other established democracies where there are a number of publications on foreign policy and defence issued by the government every year outlining assessments and policies and periodic briefings, there are none in India except the routine annual reports which only give sketchy accounts of what happened in the previous year rather than what is likely to happen and what the country should be doing.

Again, in other established democracies, there are think-tanks manned by specialists who have access to government information on a graded basis. Often, the think-tanks are given contracts for studies to be done for government departments. They have to be provided all necessary information by the government to carry out such studies. In India, the government has a tradition of not even sharing the time of the day with any non-official, autonomous, academic institution. Often, officials do not even share information with their colleagues who have a need to know.

Nor does our media have many people who specialise on defence, though of late a start has been made. In the West, the defence and foreign policy establishments hand out many stories every day and usually a tacit relationship develops between the government, its agencies and the media. Even while being critical, the media in those countries does not have an adversarial relationship with the government and its agencies on national security issues. This is not always the case in India.

The net result of all these factors is inadequate attention to problems of national security. The responsibility for this situation rests squarely on the successive governments and the national

security establishment. The NDA government began with a proclaimed commitment to national security of a much higher order than its predecessors and established a National Security Council, a National Security Advisory Board and a Strategic Planning Group in 1998. A new beginning was made and there was a break with tradition in first setting up a Kargil Review Committee and then publishing its report. Then came the Group of Ministers to revamp the entire national security framework as recommended by the Kargil Review Committee. The four Task Forces set up by them have completed their work and submitted their reports promptly. It is expected that the Group of Ministers will act equally promptly and come up with their recommendations. Hopefully, the country is likely to witness a progressive revamping of its national security framework for the first time since independence.

While the structure may get reformed and updated, the problem of attitudinal change towards national security is beyond the scope of this Group of Ministers. That is a matter for the political leadership at the highest level. The media has commented that the National Security Council set up in 1998 had hardly met. The NSC and the Cabinet Committee on National Security (CCNS) has, with one exception, the same composition in terms of five cabinet ministers, including the Prime Minister. The Secretariat for CCNS is the Cabinet Secretariat, while for the NSC it is the NSC Secretariat.

The two bodies have, however, totally different roles. The CCNS is a decision making body, which has to focus on current security problems. It has also to approve decisions on current equipment procurement. The NSC has an advisory and deliberating role to develop long-term future-oriented perspectives and to direct the ministries to come up with policies and recommendations to the CCNS and to monitor their implementation. Because of this role, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission is also a member of the NSC. In order to play this role effectively, it needs long-term as well as current intelligence assessments. Its deliberations and advice on long-term policies will have to be based on such assessments. It would appear from media reports that the NSC has not met, that in this country, without a tradition of strategic thinking and without much interest in national security on the part of our political class, it has not



been found easy to get over the inertia and switch to a culture of anticipatory planning for national security. There are many reasons for it. Our intelligence agencies have not been equipped and oriented towards long-term intelligence forecasting. Our Foreign Service is mostly geared to react to immediate events. Policy planning has never taken off in that ministry. The Joint Intelligence Committee and long-term intelligence assessments have never been given due importance because of the lack of interest in anticipatory security planning. The Chiefs of Staff, being operational commanders, do not have adequate time for long-term future-oriented thinking. The Ministry of Defence has burdened itself with housekeeping functions of the Armed Forces, and has not been conditioned and trained to think through long-term international and national security issues. Therefore, there is not sufficient awareness in the government that the country is not equipped to plan long-term national security policy. At best, it is equipped only to carry out short-term and current national security management. This is a crucial challenge to Indian security. Because of this grave lacuna, the National Security Council is not able to function even after it was formally set up two years ago.

The tragedy is that even the nature of the illness has not been diagnosed. Only the symptoms are being treated. That by itself no doubt is to be welcomed, but it will not produce a permanent cure. The situation is likely to become further complicated with the new role we have envisaged for India as a state with nuclear weapons, an emerging economic power on a high-growth trajectory, a strategic partner of major powers, a global player, an aspiring permanent member of the Security Council and an increasingly democratising and federalising polity. We are to achieve all these objectives as an open society.

There is inadequate realisation in this country that achieving these aims will amount to a major alteration of the status quo in Asia and the world. Therefore, there will be a lot of resistance to it from both within and outside the country and the interaction of forces hostile to such development within and outside the country. In conceptual terms, steering India towards the goals outlined above smoothly and safely with minimum damage is the basic security challenge. If that task is to be successfully tackled, there has to be long-term coherent

thinking on the risks and threats we are likely to face and long-term planning to deal with them. Let us enumerate the threats and risks and how to deal with them briefly.

The Indian leadership accepted the need for nuclear deterrence from the early 1980s, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi initiated the nuclear weapons programme in response to the Pakistan-China nuclear proliferation axis which had the tacit acquiescence of the US. India declared itself a nuclear weapons state after the *Shakti* tests in 1998. The National Security Advisory Board has come out with a draft nuclear doctrine. In my view, understandably because I was the Convenor of the Board, the doctrine is the most logical, most restrained and most economical. But it is only a draft doctrine. Strategies, policies, targeting plans, command and control, all need to be worked out. It is not enough if the country has nuclear weapons. It should be able to project credible deterrence. Deterrence involves some aspects of transparency and others of opacity. Therefore, there is an urgent need to work out the correct mix. A partially visible command and control structure is an essential ingredient in deterrence. Demonstration of capabilities of vectors is yet another. A robust and secure C<sup>4</sup>I<sup>2</sup> system is the third. A clearly ordained political and military succession is fourth. A demonstrated involvement of political leadership in command and control exercise is fifth and so on. Not only should these issues be addressed, but they should be *seen* to be addressed.

Fortunately, if we take him at his word, General Musharraf agrees with our Prime Minister that there are no significant risks of nuclear weapons being used in war between the two countries. Logically, it follows that even large-scale conventional wars are unlikely. Our recent preparedness should reinforce this perception. We should continue our efforts to dissuade him from thinking about large-scale conventional war by having a visible dissuasive capability. However, General Musharraf does not rule out proxy wars. In April 1999, he predicted that while nuclear and conventional wars were unlikely the probability of proxy wars was on the rise. He was in a position to assert it most knowledgeably since, at that time, his Northern Light Infantry men were infiltrating the Kargil

heights. His attempt at 'salami slicing' in Kargil ended in disaster. Therefore, India should be prepared to face proxy wars in future as it has been doing for the past 17 years. Till now, and as of today, the proxy war is being fought by India on the basis of *ad hoc* improvisation. Surely, there is scope for a comprehensive and integrated strategy against proxy war. Counter-terrorism needs societal mobilisation and effective intelligence effort. Various steps in counter-offensive operations will have to be thought through — the most important being in the field of information campaign.

Those who wage proxy war against this country take advantage of our weaknesses. The faultlines in our society are exploited. Our borders are porous. Drugs, man-portable arms, terrorism, fake currency and illegal immigrants are able to pass through. So also, our sea shores are not always effectively guarded. Seven tons of high explosives could be landed on the Maharashtra coast in one instance. Our air space too was violated with impunity when arms were dropped at Purulia. This country has contributed the term politician-bureaucracy-organised crime nexus to the political lexicon. Political cum bureaucratic corruption is rampant in the country because of the role money and muscle power play in elections. Corruption at lower levels cannot be effectively tackled when there is corruption at higher levels. A widely corrupt society cannot provide good and efficient governance. A corrupt and misgoverned polity is highly vulnerable from the point of view of national security. It is like a body affected by the AIDS disease. The immunity to resist infection drops and the body is liable to various kinds of diseases. Foreign intelligence agencies can make use of organised criminals like narcotics barons, money launderers and smugglers to infiltrate arms and terrorists. Some years ago the Pakistani press published an interview with one of their drug barons, Haji Iqbal Beg, who boasted that he sent the drugs across to his friends in India who shipped them to Europe and America. A CIA report gave details of the activities of Pakistani drug barons and their transactions *via* India. They did not evoke much response in this country.

In 1997, in a talk at Georgia University, US Defence Secretary William Cohen said that since the US was going to build an unrivalled defence force he expected its adversaries to hit at the US indirectly

through international terrorism. In our case too, since we are reversing the trend of cuts in defence spending and are initiating programmes of defence modernisation, we should expect our adversaries to wage a campaign of terrorism and proxy war. Corruption and lack of good governance provide opportunities to our adversaries to exploit our vulnerabilities. Therefore, there must be adequate popular awareness in the country that corruption and misgovernance are national security threats.

Cynics would argue that there is corruption all over the world, including in many long established democracies. After all, a company in one of the best governed countries in the world, the *Bofors*, indulged in corruption in this country. The result of that corruption has been a virtual paralysis of decision-making in our defence procurement for years with adverse impact on our preparedness. Those countries, however, even having the same problem of corruption, do not have neighbours who wage proxy war and a campaign of terrorism against them. Very few of them are as multiethnic, multilingual, multireligious and multicultural as India is. Those who are corrupt and therefore look away for a consideration from legitimate law enforcement, and politicians who shield organised crime barons in exchange for large sums of black money to fund party coffers, may not realise that their corruption amounts to treason and endangering national security. It is the duty of the state to create that awareness.

As Indian economic development accelerates, one must anticipate the adversaries of India to target it. One of the ways in which this can be done is by subjecting the country's economic symbols to terrorist attacks as happened in Mumbai in March 1993. Mumbai recovered in remarkably short time. But imagine the consequences and impact of such attacks simultaneously carried out in a number of Indian cities. It would hit the business confidence of foreign investors. Terrorism can thus be directed against Indian economic development. Our long-term anticipatory planning for national security must take this into account, our business community should be sensitised to this and their support mobilised to deal with this threat.

The recent report on police reforms brings out clearly how much the politicisation of police forces in the states has led to failure in law

enforcement. I mentioned earlier that the resulting misgovernance is a grave vulnerability in our national security. But do we tell our political class this simple truth and what damage they are doing because of their wayward governance? This is not a political question but a national security issue.

The present Home Minister promised to bring out a White Paper on the activities of the Inter Services Intelligence Agency of Pakistan in this country. That was a welcome move and would have helped to sensitise our population to the threats of proxy war, terrorism and subversion that they face. It would have contributed to societal mobilisation. But for reasons that are not clear or cannot be logically inferred, it has not yet been published. It is alleged that its publication would expose the sources of our intelligence agencies. It does not speak highly of our drafting and communication skills, if a White Paper cannot be published without revealing the sources. This again highlights the mindset which does not have a comprehensive understanding of national security and the need for societal mobilisation in defence of our security.

If we are able to initiate the process of long-range future-oriented assessments of threats and challenges to our national security, what will be the areas of our concern? The foremost concern should be the security of our communications and the transactions in our economic institutions. There have been cases in the West where millions of dollars were robbed from banks by computer hackers. Recently, after a visit to the United States, Mr Pramod Mahajan said that our entire banking system could be wrecked by our adversaries if we do not take adequate precautions to protect our communications and that it would be far worse than an atom bomb on a city. He was no doubt right. But unfortunately in this country, there is not sufficient awareness about the need to protect our communications through encoding. Instead, some vested interests are attempting to delay and derail efforts to increase the carrying capacity, the band width for telephone and computer communications. There again is no attempt on the part of our national security establishment to educate the population at large, both on the need to rapidly improve our connectivity as well as the need for awareness to protect own individual communications.

If this is not done expeditiously, not only will vulnerabilities to our economy increase, but in all negotiations between our economic institutions and outsiders we shall be at a disadvantage since the outside world is in a position to tap any information stored in a computer connected to the Internet and transmitted through telephones. Recently, France accused the US of allowing its business establishments to have access to information gained by their intelligence collection satellites meant for military purposes. There is a lot of complacency in India with respect to this security challenge. It is felt that we have a large reservoir of people with skills in software engineering and we know all about it.

The Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) is the future of war, if and when it takes place. This is the application of information and sensor technologies to improve the accuracy of weapons, obtaining real time information on the adversary and using information superiority to protect and defend oneself and severely damage the adversary's capability to wage war. One saw the application of some aspects of RMA during the Gulf and Kosovan Wars. But there is further scope for advances in this area. There are both offensive and defensive aspects in this field.

Arising out of these challenges is the issue of India preparing itself to meet them in terms of the next generation weaponry which will incorporate information technology, microelectronics and sophisticated sensors. Today's defence production establishments under the Ministry of Defence are incapable of producing the next generation weaponry and equipment. The private sector in India is today far ahead of defence production establishments in capabilities in these areas. Therefore, planning to involve the private sector in such defence production should start right now. Unfortunately, there is not much evidence of either the Defence Ministry or the private sector being fully cognisant of the nature of problems they will be facing.

Till now security planners in India were attempting to carry out tasks on the basis of their past experience or what they learnt from the industrialised countries. Often there was a time lag in absorbing the experience of industrialised countries after analysing what would be applicable to our security environment. As mentioned earlier, our

understanding of national security is not future-oriented. Even in the rest of the world, where countries have a strategic tradition, the common saying till recently used to be that generals prepare to fight the last war. It is no longer possible to deal with problems of national security on the basis of past experience only, though that experience is very valuable as a learning process. Today's national security challenges call for thinking ahead, to anticipate which state- and non-state actors entertain hostile intentions towards our state, society and value systems and what they are likely to do, and to devise ways and means to check them. Therefore, it needs future-oriented research into international, national, political, social, economic and technological developments to keep abreast with the thinking of potentially hostile state- and non-state actors. This is why in other countries national defence universities have been established and scholarly research is carried out to enable the national security establishment to keep a step ahead of potential adversaries. Unfortunately, the recognition that national security today calls for high intellectual inputs and is not a routine bureaucratic management exercise by both people in uniform and civilians is yet to develop in this country. That raises further questions of training, periodic refresher courses, updating of knowledge and information for officers in the Defence and Intelligence Services and the civil servants. The present culture of generalism has become outdated and counter-productive.

There are many in this country who will ask whether all this is necessary and whether these steps will not lead us towards becoming a garrison state. I am a liberal, totally abhor violence in any form, hate nuclear weapons and would like nothing better than a world without enemies and weapons. I am committed to good government, democracy, equal opportunities for all, affirmative action to speed up upward mobility of hitherto disadvantaged sections of society, an equitable economic order, secular and casteless society, total elimination of corruption and maximum human rights to every one. The issue is how to move towards that world. A section of our people argue that we should set an example to promote that world. I agree wholeheartedly. However, we are not living in an island, without the rest of the world actively impinging on us. We cannot afford to ignore the intentions of others, benign and hostile, towards us. In the Mahabharata, Bhishma, lying on his bed of arrows, taught the



Pandavas the principles of statecraft. He told them: "Nobody is anybody's friend. Nobody is anybody's enemy. It is the circumstances that make enemies and friends." Thousands of years later Lord Palmerston, a British Foreign Secretary, re-enunciated the dictum in words which every student of International Relations is taught: "There is no permanent friend, there is no permanent enemy. There is only permanent interest." In fact, in this country, this dictum is better understood in domestic politics but not so much in foreign policy. Therefore, while we should try to pursue a non-aggressive policy, one of good neighbourliness and of friendship and co-operation and promote the concept of *Vasudeva Kutumbakam* (the whole world is a family), we will not be fair to one sixth of mankind if in the name of such professed idealism we sacrifice their security, safety and interests. Very often, such posturing becomes a convenient cloak for incompetence and mediocrity.

This is where the Gandhiji-Cariappa interaction is highly relevant. Gandhiji was an apostle of non-violence and went on a fast in 1948 to compel the Government of India to release money which was Pakistan's due. Yet, he strongly supported the Indian Army going into action to save Kashmir because he found there was no alternative to the use of violence against wanton aggression. At another point, Gandhiji said forgiveness adorned a soldier but added that only the strong could forgive. A mouse being torn by a cat could not claim to forgive the cat, he argued. If the world is to be reshaped and values of peace, freedom, international co-operation and justice are to be promoted, only the strong can do it and not the weak. One should have a realistic assessment of the international situation as it exists, not as one would like to fantasise it to be. The international community has legitimised nuclear weapons and the use of force without declaring war. When countries are harassed by international terrorism and proxy wars, by narcotics traffic and organised crime often posing as noble causes, the international community often looks away. In trying to counter these efforts to wreck and derail our development process, no doubt excesses often occur. There can be no disputing that they should be curbed. But that cannot be done by abdicating the basic responsibility of the state to counter and overwhelm the criminal and anarchist forces. There are genuine grounds to complain that the problems of use of force in a fair and just manner with restraint and

effectiveness have not been addressed. But that is part of the overall problem of indifference to issues of national security, incompetence and mediocrity in governance.

It is often argued that this country should not be spending money on armaments and the national security effort before tackling poverty. Some others are of the view that because our poor have no stake in this country, society and polity and since our politicians have to reflect the views of the constituency of the poor, they are indifferent to national security. These are superficial and illogical arguments mostly meant as alibis for the 'lotus eating' attitude of our political class. It is estimated that some thirty per cent of our people are below the poverty line and seventy per cent are above it. One would therefore expect that seventy per cent to have a stake in national security and be on guard to ensure that external as well as internal hostile forces do not disrupt our economic development. Secondly, if adequate resources have not been applied for education, health, water supply, housing and job creation, it is not due to disproportionate diversion of resources to national security but due to the fact, according to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, that only 15 paise out of every rupee spent reaches the poor. The rest is siphoned off by the politician-bureaucracy-organised crime combine, which I have already termed as one of the major national security threats. Therefore, those who overlook this diversion of resources meant for poverty alleviation and provision of basic needs through corruption and ask the country to reduce its national security preparedness are only helping the continuous robbing of the poor. Very often, such lobbies are assisted by funds from abroad, from sources which are interested in diverting attention away from the real reasons for the lack of speed in eliminating poverty, namely corruption and the imperative need for our national security preparedness.

In these circumstances, the responsibility for rectifying the present situation, increasing the popular awareness about problems of national security and initiating the whole package of measures to safeguard our security and accelerate the political, social, economic and technological developments, which are two sides of the coin of promoting a just social order, is with the government and particularly the National Security Council.

The Cabinet Secretariat Resolution No 281/29.6.98 /TS dated 16 April 1999 stated, "The Central Government recognises that national security management requires integrated thinking and coordinated application of the political, military, diplomatic, scientific and technological resources of the state to protect and promote national security goals and objectives. National security in the context of the nation, needs to be viewed not only in military terms but also in terms of internal security, economic security, technological strength and foreign policy. The role of the council is to advise the Central Government on the said matters".

If the National Security Council is not able to fulfil the role prescribed for it, that becomes a challenge to national security. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse why it has not been able to fulfil that role and what could be done to ensure that the NSC can play that role.

The NSC and the Cabinet Committee on National Security have two distinct and complementary roles. The NSC has to look to the future. According to the Cabinet Resolution, the NSC is to cover external security, security threats involving atomic energy, space and high technology, trends in the world economy and economic security threats, internal security, patterns of alienation emerging in the country, especially those with a social, communal or religious dimension, trans-border crimes and intelligence co-ordination and tasking. Broadly, it covers the areas I had earlier enumerated as those posing security challenges.

This task of the NSC cannot be carried out without dedicated staff, which has adequate expertise and the ability to develop holistic future-oriented perspectives and submit them for deliberations of the NSC. In the light of those deliberations, the NSC will advise different ministries and organisations to come up with policy recommendations. Those, in turn, will be considered by the Cabinet Committee for National Security and decisions taken thereon. Unfortunately, this has not happened and the NSC has not functioned at all in the absence of a fully developed staff support. The present NSC staff are the old JIC staff, with some marginal additions. That staff has to discharge its earlier function as the intelligence assessing body, at a

time when failure of assessment process has been under intense criticism. Further, the same staff provided secretariat support to the National Security Advisory Board, the Kargil Review Committee and the four Task Forces set up to review defence management, intelligence, border management and internal security. It is quite obvious that adequate thought has not been given to develop an appropriate staff for the National Security Council to function effectively. It is therefore not surprising that the council has not been functional.

The task cannot be performed by the ministries offering their inputs which are then co-ordinated. The ministries are focussed on the present and are not equipped to undertake a holistic long-term view of various security issues. The generalist system of civil service in this country inhibits civil servants acquiring the required expertise in most of the ministries. The country has not developed the culture of contract research, and our civil servants are not used to sharing information which is necessary to have successful contract research. In fact, information handling is an area of grave weakness with our civil services.

It is understandable that for a country where the political class and the bureaucracy, including the uniformed one, have not developed adequate familiarity with the total concept of national security, as is evident from the NSC being formed only 52 years after independence, there will be teething troubles, various infantile ailments and adolescent problems in the development of NSC and its full effective functioning. What is worrying and of concern is that it has not even let out its first cry since birth. The amateurish experiment of V P Singh set back the concept of NSC by many years. One is worried that a NSC on paper, without any activity, will prove fatal to future holistic national security management in this country.

There is the Sanskrit saying 'Yatha Raja Thatha Praja' – as is the king so are the subjects. If at the top most political level there is an attitude of casual approach to national security, one cannot expect the bureaucracy, the parliament, the media and others to pay more meaningful attention to national security except when the issue is used as a political football. President Truman talked of the buck stopping in his office. In our system the buck stops with the Prime

Minister. Therefore, the responsibility for the present unsatisfactory situation of casual approach to national security vests with the Prime Minister and his immediate advisers in matters of national security. I am not saying this in a spirit of criticism. I am aware that the last two years have seen many steps forward in this area, including the setting up of the NSC. I am pointing out the deficiencies with a view to help not only diagnose the problem but to prescribe the treatment. I have some credentials in this field. I have devoted more than forty years of my working life to advance Indian national security in a holistic manner. I have advocated and campaigned for setting up an NSC for the last thirty years. I would not like to see the experiment fail. Therefore, let me detail my suggestions to activate the National Security Council.

I have gone on record that it is difficult to do justice to both the responsibilities of the offices of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and that of National Security Adviser (NSA). However, I shall not press that point any further. Whether the Chief of a Government can have his utmost confidence in one or more persons is a matter no one from outside can prescribe. It has to be left to him, though my preference is clear. If he chooses to have only one person to man both posts, then the work has to be organised in such a way and the structure and processes of the NSC should be so devised as to ensure smooth functioning of the National Security Council. There are very well tried out organisational principles to deal with the problem. Today, there is a well-established and adequately staffed Prime Minister's Office. But there is no adequately staffed National Security Council office under the NSA. The present NSC Secretariat, the *old* JIC, is part of the Cabinet Secretariat. Let its old name be revived and let it focus more effectively and exclusively on intelligence assessment. That is a full time and enormously burdensome responsibility. The NSA requires independent dedicated staff to activate the NSC.

The NSC must have a regular timetable to meet on a prescribed day every fortnight at the initial stage and once a week a little later. Members of the NSC will arrange their tour programmes keeping that regular meeting in view. The NSC should have comprehensive intelligence briefings in each meeting to be followed by a discussion. The Chiefs of Staff and Intelligence Chiefs and the concerned

secretaries should attend these meetings. These discussions should be free for all ministers and officials and should not follow the cabinet procedure where the official speaks only when spoken to. It is quite possible that the discussion that follows would generate perspectives for studies, sensitise the NSC to anticipate future situations and promote more intensive interaction at the top levels of bureaucracy. At the initial stage, with a staff which is new and still to acquire expertise, it may be necessary to set up task forces to come up with studies on various issues. In this respect, the recent experiment of setting up task forces is a valuable one. In about two to three years time a reasonably well trained staff will be in place. Simultaneously, a number of autonomous think-tanks have to be encouraged and research in universities on national security issues should be supported. One of the problems we have is that national security management is not looked upon as a long-term issue in which capabilities have to be developed over a period of time. Each Cabinet looks upon it as an issue limited to its term of office. The NSC or the Prime Minister should hold regular periodic meetings once in three or four months to brief other parties in the Parliament and keep them informed through a regular supply of literature. The NSC Secretariat should also ensure that when major policy statements are made these are made available to all political leaders and bureaucrats, and they should be informed that was the Government's policy and no pronouncements should be made in *ad hoc* and off the cuff remarks by the official hierarchy. Therefore, a lot more attention has to be paid to the information policy of the government on matters related to national security.

Perhaps I shall be told that in our system, described by Professor Galbraith as the only functioning anarchy, all this is not possible and I am out of touch with political realities. That, in my view, is an alibi for not making the necessary effort. That is an abdication of the responsibility of leadership. For decades I was told that India could not afford to go nuclear, mostly by people who had not taken the trouble to study the subject.

This is the right moment to start the effort to make the NSC to work. Thanks mostly to efforts of this government, India is entering an era in which it is called upon to play a global role and is poised to

enter into a high growth trajectory. Therefore, it is the responsibility of this government to lay strong foundations for a national security planning structure and to start training cadres who will later on man the posts in that structure. The present cadre of generalist civil servants cannot do it.

The development of the awareness to initiate these tasks constitute the core challenge to our national security. The present stop-go attitude of casual approach to it in normal times and finger pointing at the time of crisis has got to change through leadership efforts. Bringing about these attitudinal changes, setting up an appropriate national security planning structure and organising the training of cadres are more difficult tasks than testing nuclear weapons. There is no point in just listing out various security challenges if the country continues to lack the mechanism to assess the long-term implications of each one of those and to plan our responses to them.

These vital challenges of bringing about attitudinal changes towards our national security and taking steps to get the NSC working have been neglected for far too long. The country cannot afford to continue this way much longer without paying high costs. Let me hope that the leadership will pay immediate attention to these basic challenges.

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# The Role of the Chief of Defence Staff

COL P K VASUDEVA (RETD)

**B**ased on the Kargil Committee Report, the Prime Minister constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) to review the national security system in its entirety and to formulate specific proposals for implementation. The GoM had set up four task forces, one each for Intelligence Apparatus, Border Management, Internal Security and Management of Defence.

The Task Force for Management of Defence had been set up under the chairmanship of Shri Arun Singh for the following :-

- (a) Examine the existing organisation and structures and recommend such steps as are considered necessary for improving the management of the country's defence.
- (b) Examine the changes required in the management structure in the emerging security scenario, having regard to the nuclearised environment, revolution in military affairs, information revolution and other developments.
- (c) Make recommendations to bring about improvements in the procurement processes and to ensure a more cost-effective Management of Defence.

The Task Force on Defence Management has submitted its 300 pages report to the Home Minister L K Advani, who heads the GoMs, taking stock of these recommendations. The report has advocated a major revamp of the defence establishment.

The Task Force on Defence Management has strongly recommended the creation of the post of the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) as its preferred option. Unlike the present arrangement,

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which accommodates the three Chiefs of equal rank, the CDS will be the senior most officer in the military hierarchy and will represent all the three Services jointly. The Chief of the Defence Staff will have under him a Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS).

### **Integrated Functioning**

It is part of the legacy of history that our parliamentary democracy and administrative structures are patterned after British systems. Unfortunately in terms of functioning in the Ministry of Defence, this is not so. If Lord Esher's recommendations had been accepted in 1919, the present dichotomy in our defence organisation may not have arisen. In the UK the Ministry of Defence is an integrated organisation comprising of civil servants, military officers, scientists and procurement executives, each working in his own respective sphere as well as collectively. They take joint decisions where required. The Ministry of Defence and Service Headquarters are fully integrated and is one entity. The same pattern broadly obtains in other democracies.

In India, the system is very different. The Ministry of Defence is an entirely separate entity from the Service Headquarters and is staffed exclusively by civil servants. Situated alongside is the Ministry of Finance (Defence), which is yet another separate entity. This results in triplication of work. Each of the three entities – Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Finance (Defence), and Service Headquarters tend to examine issues in isolation. This leads to considerable delays and development of "we and they" syndrome instead of a combined outlook.

### **Professional Co-ordination**

Modern wars are no longer a one Service affair. They require the participation of all the three Services for a successful operation. The national leadership, unfamiliar with the intricacies of national security management, accepted Lord Mountbatten's recommendations. There has been very little change over the past 53 years despite the 1962 debacle, the 1965 stalemate and the 1971 victory, the growing nuclear threat, end of the Cold War, continuance of proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir for over a decade and the revolution in military affairs. The political, bureaucratic, military and

intelligence establishments appear to have developed a personal stake in the status quo. National security management recedes into the background in times of peace and is considered too delicate to be tempered with in times of war and proxy war. The recommendations of the Task Force regarding the appointment of CDS is timely and must be considered with all the seriousness, keeping in view our national security interests.

### **Appointment of CDS**

There have been many reasons for India not adopting the Chief of Defence Staff system. There has been the politician's fear of the man on horseback, the bureaucrat's opposition to any measure that may loosen his grip over the Services, the serving Service Chiefs' reservations about an erosion in their position of professional pre-eminence, and lastly the feeling in the Navy and the Air Force that this may lead to domination by the Army, which is so many times larger in size.

Those who oppose the Chief of Defence Staff arrangement put forward the following arguments :-

- (a) It will erode civilian supremacy over the military. It will lead to concentration of too much authority in a man in uniform, with the attendant risk of a military coup as in Pakistan.

*Comments:* He will only be an Inter-Service professional adviser and co-ordinator. The Army Chiefs in different countries have carried out military coups, but not the CDS.

- (b) The Chiefs of Staff Committee is providing adequate professional co-ordination and the introduction of CDS would not improve matters.

*Comments:* This is a fallacious argument. The annually changing part-time Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee is not in a position to ensure effective co-ordination between the Services, as the CDS would do.

- (c) The present system has worked well in the past and during the wars that we have fought since independence. Why then change the present system?

*Comments:* This again is not a convincing answer because we have lost thousands of precious lives due to lack of co-ordination at the Ministry of Defence level. Unfortunately, Ministry of Defence bureaucrats are never made accountable for their actions/inactions. 1947-48 was a war in which only the Army was engaged. The Navy did not participate and the Air Force was only marginally involved. The 1962 debacle again was solely the Army's war, with the Air Force out of the battle and the Navy not in the picture at all. In 1965, the Army and the Air Force virtually fought their own battles because of the lack of co-ordination at the Ministry of Defence level. The Air Force was too preoccupied with striking Pakistani air bases at Sargodha and Peshawar, and the Army's success at Haji Pir, Sialkot and Lahore sectors needed Air Force support. Had the success of Haji Pir been exploited further with the help of the Air Force, we could have liberated Kashmir in toto. In 1971 all the three Services were fully involved and the success is attributed to long planning and co-ordination at the three Services Chief level. However, operations in Sindh were not very well co-ordinated in terms of timings and objectives. A CDS would have ensured better co-ordination and fewer casualties. In the proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir and the latest Kargil operations there was a complete lack of co-ordination between the Ministry of Defence and the Home Ministry and between the three Services. Had the CDS been there, the Air Force in the Kargil operations would have been used right from the beginning to save the precious lives of our brave soldiers and the operation would have also been rolled up in a short time. The ding dong battle was due to the lack of co-ordination at the Ministry of Defence level which is not accountable for any failure.

- (d) A CDS may be necessary for nations who have global commitments and have to be prepared to fight a global war. A nation like India whose military interests are confined to the vicinity of its borders does not need this system.

*Comments:* This shows incorrect thinking. The necessity of this system arises not from the span of military commitments but from the nature of modern war. Most of the nations which have this system do not have global commitments.

(e) Fears are expressed about the introduction of this system in India leading to domination of the Army over the Navy and the Air Force.

*Comments :* This is not a valid fear. There are many countries like Russia, Egypt, Iraq, the USA and so on, where there is great imbalance in the strength of the three Services. This has not created any difficulty in those countries. There is also little reason to doubt the wisdom and integrity of the senior officers of the three Services.

The apprehension that the CDS would have too much power and a strong incumbent would use it extraconstitutionally is not valid. The reality is that the CDS would command no troops and wield no direct power. He is to ensure a better co-ordination among the three Services for smooth functioning and success in future wars.

Our democracy is well established and changes in the government have made no difference to the Armed Forces. They are loyal to the Constitution and not to any individual or party. The CDS should be appointed by rotation among the three Services, as the three Service Chiefs are equally capable soldiers of great integrity and professional competence.

## **Conclusion**

Defence analysts point out that the reorganisation has major operational implications. Instead of allowing the three Services to operate in relative insularity and water tight compartments, the new arrangement aims at efficiency involving all the three Services at all levels, right from the stage of planning to execution in an integrated manner. These changes are driven by the principle of optimising the use of resources available with the three Services to achieve military objectives.

The Task Force has also recommended delegating more administrative powers to the Defence Services to cut down red tapism from the Ministry of Defence. The Services will be relatively freed from bureaucratic interference in managing their resources, and function more efficiently once the recommendations of the report are implemented.

# Siachen After Kargil

(PART-I)

LT GEN M THOMAS, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (RETD)

## Introduction

In his controversial book *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy*, Alaistar Lamb states that in 1978 either the Indians or the Pakistanis appreciated that the Siachen Glacier region offered an avenue for outflanking the Line of Control (LoC) delineated as a result of the 1972 Simla Agreement, without a technical violation. Pakistan, always on the lookout to score one over the more trusting Indians, secretly improved communications to this area from its side. In the late 1970s, Pakistan opened up the K2 region for foreign mountaineering expeditions which were invariably accompanied by Pakistani liaison officers. The more adventurous and intrepid of these commenced to plan the climb of peaks, East of K2, thereby encroaching further into this area. These lay virtually in "no-man's-land". Such expeditions from the direction of Pakistan were countered by Indian expeditions mounted by teams from India's High Altitude Warfare School based at Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir. Policymakers on both sides appreciated that the Siachen Glacier region was of both symbolic and practical importance in the context of Pakistan's unilateral occupation of the Northern Areas. For India to dominate the Siachen Glacier region beyond the limits of the LoC would be, according to Pakistani strategists, a first step (by India) towards the eventual recovery by force of arms of the old Gilgit Agency, the strategic importance of which (according to the Pakistani line of thought) lingers on in the minds of India's Foreign Service bureaucrats and geo-political thinkers as the key to holding the western end of India's northern frontier. For Pakistan, to pull back from Siachen would be to accept that the Northern Areas might yet be lost and the psychologically crucial land-link with China might yet be severed. Consequently, Pakistan, well known in the context of India-Pakistan belligerence to always take the first dangerous step towards military confrontation, sent Army patrols to keep Indian

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(mountaineering) parties off the Siachen in 1982. Slow to awake, the Indian military machine, with governmental approval, swung into action and a brigade-sized force secured the Glacier in 1984.

Ever since 1984, therefore, India and Pakistan have been waging a war for the possession of the Siachen Glacier region. This wedge-shaped piece of heavily-glaciated terrain which lies between the Great Karakoram and the Saltoro Ranges, isolated and uninhabited, in the northern sector of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, was the chosen battlefield. In April 1984, the Indian Army in an extraordinary *coup de main* seized this territory in an unprecedented and daring helicopter-borne operation, which dropped highly trained and equipped infantry onto key mountain passes on the Saltoro Ridge that controlled access to the area. This action was resisted by Pakistani forces who unsuccessfully attempted time and again to eject the Indians from these positions. The Indian Army's 102 Infantry Brigade continues to hold these positions since then. The military confrontation and dispute over the Siachen Glacier is a low level war of attrition between brigade-sized formations on a 110 km frontage along the Saltoro Ridge. Quite without precedent in the history of warfare, it has earned the distinction of being fought on the world's highest battleground. The opposing forces face each other at altitudes of over 6000 metres above sea level. Over the years this war of attrition has witnessed great feats of individual courage on both sides, with ingenuity and innovation in matters of survival and fighting. The arduous terrain, the inhospitable climate and constant clash of arms exact a heavy toll on both sides. Both India and Pakistan, as developing countries, can ill-afford the colossal expense in terms of the loss of skilled personnel and to the national exchequer<sup>1</sup> in, what is deemed by the rest of the world, to be a futile clash of arms to retain an area which is of insignificant strategic value and where not a blade of grass grows.

The Kargil intrusions by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir, on a 110 km frontage overlooking the vital Srinagar-Leh Highway in May-August 1999, has added a new dimension to the war on the

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<sup>1</sup> Defence Minister George Fernandes recently revealed to the Lok Sabha that the cost of sustaining hostilities on the Glacier amounted to thirty million rupees a day. Besides, more than 3000 soldiers have died in hostilities on the Glacier.



Siachen Glacier. South and West of the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) on the Saltoro Range lies the LoC demarcated at the end of the 1971 Indo-Pak War. Had the Pakistanis succeeded in interdicting the Srinagar-Leh Highway, the Siachen Glacier region would have been isolated. The ongoing series of talks between the Indian Foreign and Defence Secretaries to resolve the Siachen Glacier dispute (and the Kashmir issue) has, due to this new dimension in the on-going Proxy War in the region, been seriously, and to some strategists irretrievably, jeopardised.

### **Importance of the Siachen Glacier**

India's strategic interest in the Siachen Glacier Region can be laid at the door of the growth of the close relationship between Pakistan and China, encompassing extensive military ties and collusion over the disputed international border in Jammu and Kashmir. Opportunities for concerted action by Pakistan and China were enhanced by great improvements in communications, highlighted by the secretly built 800 km all-weather Karakoram Highway, completed in 1978, connecting Pakistan with Chinese Xinjiang through the Khunjerab Pass (4703 m).

The Siachen Glacier region dominates two axes, allowing ingress into Ladakh via the Shyok and Nubra valleys. One of the reasons that led India to launch Operation Meghdoot to secure the Siachen Glacier region was the appreciation of a combined Chinese and Pakistani assault via the Siachen Glacier towards Leh, the Headquarters of the Ladakh District of Jammu and Kashmir. Besides, if Siachen was lost, Indian positions at the Karakoram Pass would become untenable, because of a threat from the flanks. But this appreciation of the Siachen Glacier region as a possible back-door entry to Ladakh can now be discounted, since the terrain and climate prevent the mounting of large-scale operations.

In the 1980s, based partly on the notion of a two-front war, Pakistan considered the Siachen Glacier region and the Northern Areas vital to its security in the light of an assessment that the Indian occupation of the Siachen Glacier region would gain India the desired proximity to the Karakoram Highway. However, the

Karakoram Highway has no direct bearing on the Siachen conflict, as it (Siachen Glacier) could not possibly be a staging area for Indian forces, being at a considerable distance away from the Karakoram Highway and separated by untraversable mountainous terrain.

The Siachen Glacier region's importance to India lies in its geographical location, wherein are built major territorial disputes with India's two principal adversaries, China and Pakistan. Firstly, the area abuts the Indo-Tibetan border along the disputed territory of Aksai Chin. Secondly, the Shaksgam Valley illegally ceded by Pakistan to China lies to the North West. Thirdly, the Northern Areas controlled by Pakistan lie to East. The K2-Karakoram Pass- NJ 9842 triangle is a strategically located wedge of territory held by India, which prevents a closer Sino-Pak territorial nexus. Finally, the geo-strategic importance of India's stand regarding the delineation of the boundary beyond point NJ 9842 along the Siachen Glacier watershed will also apply in principle to India's stand on its unresolved disputed Himalayan borders with China.

### **Geographical Importance, Terrain and Climate**

The Indian subcontinent and Central Asia are separated by the Great Karakoram Range, known in the local vernacular as the *Bami Dunya* (roof of the world). Cecil Victor states that "From the summit of Sia Kangri (7400 M), on the rare occasions when the weather is clear, one can gaze into Tibet, Xinjiang, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian Republics."<sup>2</sup> These massive mountains separate the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia from the watershed between the Tarim Basin in Xinjiang and the Indus River System in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Siachen Glacier is the second largest in Asia, the largest being the Fedchenko Glacier in the Pamirs. It is 75 km long, 2 to 8 km wide and over 300 m deep. The glacier originates at Indira Col (5,760 M) and flows South-East to the source of the Nubra River. On its western flank is the Saltoro Range, which is transected by

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<sup>2</sup> Cecil Victor, *India : The Security Dilemma* (New Delhi, Patriot, 1990), p.125.

three passes from North to South, namely the Sia La (5,700 M) Bilafond La (5,500 M) and Gyong La (5,700 M). These allow access onto the Glacier. The northern boundary of the Siachen Glacier is formed by the Shaksgam Valley and the Siachen Muztagh (mountain range). Its eastern confines are delimited by the Stagtar Group, the Teram Kangri Group, the Teram Shehr Group, the Rimo Group, and the Karakoram Pass. The Siachen Glacier dominates the Shyok River Valley to the South. The total area covered is approximately 10,000 sq km. The Siachen Glacier is fed by numerous smaller glaciers.

In the long Himalayan winter, characterised by highly fluctuating weather patterns, the ambient surface temperature of the glacier drops below minus 40° C. The high altitude combined with low temperatures and glaciation frequently gives rise to blizzards with wind speeds in excess of 150 knots.

### Historical and Territorial Issues

The origins of the Siachen Glacier dispute lie in the armed conflict between India and Pakistan over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The first of the three Indo-Pak wars ended in January 1949 and the UN-brokered ceasefire resulted in the delineation of a cease fire line (CFL) in Jammu and Kashmir based on the actual ground positions of the opposing forces at the time of the suspension of hostilities.<sup>3</sup>

The CFL extended in a rough arc approximately 800 km long, from a point near Chhamb in Jammu in the South, North to Keran, and then East to a terminal point – N J 9842 – marked by a cairn, about 19 km North of the Shyok River in the Chulung Group of the Saltoro Range. But the 1949 CFL Agreement left the Siachen Glacier region undemarcated.<sup>4</sup> The undelimited distance due North from point N J 9842 to the Chinese border is 65 km.

<sup>3</sup> The document was titled "Agreement between Military Representatives of India and Pakistan regarding the Establishment of a Cease Fire Line in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, 27 July 1949" or the "1949 CFL Agreement" for short.

<sup>4</sup> Controversy later ensued over the wording of the 1949 CFL Agreement pertaining to delineation of the CFL beyond point N J 9842. Both sides would interpret the statement "thence north to the Glaciers" in their own way.

India's contention is that the *de facto* border in the Siachen Glacier region should be extended according to the accepted international principle of delineating boundaries in mountainous terrain along the high crest separating watersheds. As such, "North to the Glaciers", would mean, in India's interpretation, along the Saltoro ridge line<sup>5</sup> to the Chinese border in the proximity of K2 (8611 m). Pakistan argues that if the CFL is extended beyond point N J 9842, following the immediately previous course of its direction, then the Siachen Glacier region would fall within Pakistan controlled territory, terminating at the Karakoram Pass. Despite the somewhat vague wording of the 1949 CFL Agreement and the conflicting claims of India and Pakistan, it is obvious that neither side contemplated demarcation of the glaciated terrain beyond point N J 9842.

On a wider historical canvas one can see why India's stand on the inviolability of Jammu and Kashmir's accession on 26 October 1947 has been vindicated. With Independence and Partition in 1947, there arose the question of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan. The British position was that after the paramountcy of their rule lapsed, the rulers of the more than 500 princely states would be free to accede to either Dominion by signing an Instrument of Accession. The last Hindu Maharaja of this predominantly Muslim state, Hari Singh, prevaricated and signed a "stand-still agreement" with both sides, hoping no doubt, to eventually, be the ruler of an independent Jammu and Kashmir. On 22 October 1947, Kashmir was invaded by well-armed rapacious Muslim tribals from the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), supported by the Pakistan Armed Forces. It was this invasion that precipitated the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India by its ruler. As a consequence of this accession, India has a strong claim to the entire territory comprising Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan, however, disregards the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India, which it considers fraudulent and unacceptable.

India's formal claim is to the whole of Jammu and Kashmir and the so-called trans-Indus Northern Areas of Baltistan, Hunza and the Gilgit Agency. India even considers the Chitral District in

<sup>5</sup> The Saltoro ridge line is along a North-west to South-east lying spur of the Great Karakoram Range, beginning at Sia Kangri (7422 m) and terminating at the Shyok River, forming the watershed between the Shyok and Nubra Valleys.

Pakistan's NWFP as part of its national territory. Pakistan has always supported the idea of a plebiscite under UN supervision to decide Jammu and Kashmir's future. India maintains that the plebiscite issue can only be tabled once Pakistan's Armed Forces are totally withdrawn from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (POK), a mandatory requirement that was agreed to at the 1949 Karachi Agreement.

Pakistan's unilateral act of bringing the disputed Northern Areas under its direct control has further clouded the Kashmir issue. Pakistan has laid claim to the Siachen Glacier region, lying as it does at the eastern extremity of Baltistan. Both Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, 1974 onwards, and his successor General Zia-ul-Haq, consolidated these acquisitions in the Northern Areas, but the glaciated Siachen area still remained a no-man's-land. These were strenuously opposed by the leadership of the so-called Azad Kashmir which, though physically an integral part of Pakistan, remains politically apart, with its own President, a Capital (Muzaffarabad), a separate Constitution, a National Flag, and a Supreme Court. Pakistan's position on Kashmir is thus ambiguous. It supports Kashmiri self-determination through a UN-sponsored plebiscite and yet it has effectively annexed the Northern Areas.

These territorial issues are further complicated by the disputed northern boundary between Jammu and Kashmir and China's Xinjiang province. This border had remained undemarcated after the British failed to come to an agreement over its alignment with Imperial China in 1899.

Pakistan, quick off the mark, concluded a Sino-Pak Border Agreement in 1963. The Agreement covered a 320 km stretch of China's common border with the Northern Areas, from the tri-junction of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China's Xinjiang province, to the Karakoram Pass. Under the terms of the Agreement, Pakistan agreed to relinquish claims to the Shaksgam Valley-Muztagh Range drainage area which ironically was not under its actual control, in return for approximately 2,000 sq km of territory administered by China. Although the 1963 agreement was clearly advantageous to Pakistan, it did not fully resolve the intransigent issue of international

boundaries in the region. Pakistan did not have the authority to make a final settlement with China, which is still pending the outcome of the Kashmir question.<sup>6</sup> India did not recognise the 1963 Sino-Pak Border Agreement. Pakistan had no right to give away land or delineate boundaries over land that did not belong to it.

As has been earlier mentioned, the genesis of the present conflict over the Siachen Glacier region can be laid at the door of Pakistan's resolve and active connivance in allowing international mountaineering expeditions into the region.<sup>7</sup> The majority of foreign expeditions sought Pakistan's permission to enter the area.<sup>8</sup> India considered this play on the part of Pakistan as a means to gain *de facto* control over the area. India in response conducted military-led expeditions into the region.

In a previous phase of the Siachen Glacier dispute, Pakistan's claims to the Glacier received support from prestigious international mapping agencies. Successive editions of maps and atlases<sup>9</sup> depicted the LoC to extend from point N J 9842 to the Karakoram Pass. Such a cartographic reading would place the Siachen Glacier region in the lap of Pakistan.

India vigorously objected to the unilateral demarcation of the glaciated region in these publications, terming it as "cartographic aggression" or "mountain poaching". Many Indian commentators regarded this as a conspiracy in an era of Cold War geo-politics. Thus Pakistan attained an international *locus standi* over the control of the Siachen Glacier region. This reinforced its claims to *de facto* administrative control of the disputed area.

The territorial dispute as it now stands is that Pakistan considers the Siachen Glacier region to be at the eastern extremity

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<sup>6</sup> Article 6 of the 1963 Sino-Pak Border Agreement reads : "The two parties have agreed that after the settlement of the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India, the sovereign authority concerned will reopen negotiations with the Government of the Peoples Republic of China on the boundary..."

<sup>7</sup> The Siachen Glacier is overlooked by some of the world's most challenging peaks such as the Sia Kangri, Teram Kangri and Mamostong Kangri.

<sup>8</sup> 20 between 1974 and 1981.

<sup>9</sup> These included, *inter alia*, National Geographic Society, *Atlas of the World* (Washington DC); University of Chicago, *A Historical Atlas of South Asia* (Chicago and London); and the *Times Atlas of the World* (London).



of Baltistan – a Northern area that is unambiguously under its administrative control. India, on the other hand, maintains that the Siachen Glacier region is the western boundary of the Nubra Sub-Division of the Ladakh District of Jammu and Kashmir, a territory that has been under its administrative jurisdiction since the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to the Union of India in October 1947, and is therefore an inalienable part of India.

### **Military Issues**

It was during Lt Gen M L Chibber's tenure as GOC-in-C Northern Command (around September 1983) that the possibility of Pakistan forces occupying the Siachen Glacier region by force became apparent. Chibber's arguments were that if Pakistani forces were to occupy the Siachen Glacier region, it would be very costly, even impossible, for India to regain the occupied territory. So a preemptive move into the Siachen Glacier region was imperative. The decision to seize the Saltoro Range Passes, which was the key to the occupation of the Siachen Glacier region and holding on to it, was taken at the highest decision making level at New Delhi, involving the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and the Chiefs of Staff Committee. When Chibber was given the go-ahead, he realised that he would need complete tactical surprise and the logistics capability of maintaining his troops at those altitudes. The only recourse was to mount a helicopter-borne operation which would be swift, have the element of surprise and position well-acclimatised troops, to take and hold the passes.

Code-named Operation Meghdoot,<sup>10</sup> the initial platoon of 4 Kumaon, the battalion given the overall task, was airlifted in 17 sorties to positions controlling ingress routes on to the glacier through Bilafond La, on 13 April 1984. A second platoon was helicoptered onto Sia La on 17 April 1984. The Indian Army was thus the first to establish themselves on the strategic passes on the Saltoro Range, covering ingress routes onto the Siachen Glacier.<sup>11</sup> India's moves caught the Pakistanis napping. The expected counter-offensive commenced on 25 April 1984.

<sup>10</sup> Meghdoot" means "Cloud Messenger".

<sup>11</sup> The Pakistan Army later occupied the Gyong La, which it still holds.



Pakistan's counter-offensive was code-named "operation Abadeel".<sup>12</sup> This involved small elements of Pakistan's "Burzil Forces", consisting of Special Services Group Commandos and Northern Light Infantry troops specially trained and equipped to fight at high altitudes, who engaged Indian forward pickets on the Saltoro Range without any significant gains. In June, in desperation, larger forces were rushed in and further attempts at dislodging the Indians from their positions were made without effect. Realising that at these formidable, oxygen-starved altitudes, dislodging these well-entrenched Indian positions was impossible, efforts at out-flanking them were attempted. Finally, on a 110 km front along the Saltoro Range, brigade-sized forces, consisting of India's 102 Infantry Brigade and elements of Pakistan's 923 and 86 Infantry Brigades, were positioned<sup>13</sup> leading over the years to many a bitter skirmish.

In June 1987, Indian forces attacked Pakistan's Qaid Post, anticipating assaults from that post on Bilafond La. In September 1987 the largest engagement to date took place. Casualties on both sides were heavy. Following furious artillery exchanges, Pakistani forces launched a battalion-sized attack on Indian positions at Bilafond La. Using heat-seeking and guided missiles, determined attacks were made on Indian artillery OP positions. Indian forces held on grimly to their positions, with Indian artillery concentration causing heavy losses to the enemy, caught in the open.

Pakistan's repeated summer assaults against Indians OPs have been costly failures. These OPs cover Pakistan's support bases and supply routes which are under constant threat of bombardment from Indian artillery. Despite the need to evict these Indian-held OPs, Pakistan has realised the futility of attempting infantry assaults on these positions. At present the maintenance of the status quo of the AGPL on the Siachen Glacier, established as early as 1984, seems to be Pakistan's aim in this sector, particularly as Pakistan's Kargil sector intrusion in May-August 1999 ended in defeat and political disapproval world-wide.

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<sup>12</sup> "Abadeel" means "Swallow".

<sup>13</sup> This became known as the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL).

The Pakistanis hold the southern Saltoro Range pass of Gyong La. This overlooks the Nubra River Valley, which is India's approach axis to Leh and vital for the logistical maintenance of the Siachen Garrison. The AGPL on the Glacier now links up with the LoC, running West from North of Batalik sub-sector, through North of Kaksar, Drass and Muskoh Valley sub-sectors of Kargil. Pakistani positions at Gyong La are barely 20 km from India's Tsamskangchan Army Base guarding the road-head at Dzingrulma. At some stage India would attempt to wrest control of Gyong La, as otherwise her flank would be threatened on a continuing basis. India's hold of the Saltoro Range has prevented Pakistan's encroachment towards the Nubra Valley. It has further increased the area of Indian controlled territory between Pakistan and Aksai Chin.

The short Himalayan summers are the campaigning season on the Glacier and most of the resupply by both sides is attempted during these periods. While this is on, shelling by both sides continues unabated. OPs and FAOs (Forward Artillery Observers), located on high peaks and ridges, keep constant watch for the other side's patrols and resupply columns. Indian OPs and FAOS occupy higher and more advantageous locations from which they can bring down devastating fire on to Pakistani positions and resupply columns.

The cost of maintaining brigade-sized forces in this high altitude glaciated region is enormous. A foreign correspondent on a visit to the Pakistani positions on the Siachen Glacier wrote that it was estimated that a single 'roti' prepared for forward positions costs USD 20 (Rupees nine hundred) by the time it reaches them. Another estimate in the December 1998 issue of the Khatmandu-based magazine *Himal* stated that USD 2 million (Rupees nine crores) is spent daily by the two armies on the Glacier. India has built or is in the process of completing roads to its forward supply depots. A cable car (rope way) network to supply some of India's higher OPs is in the process of being built. Snow mobiles and Tobbogans are in use to ferry stores. Skis and snow shoes are in use. Despite all these innovations the helicopter still remains the life-line of the Glacier. Young dashing pilots of the Indian Army's Aviation Corps and of the IAF flying the indigenously built *Cheetah*

are regularly flown at altitudes for which they were not designed (upto 7500 m) and used for casualty evacuation, target designation and general maintenance duties such as delivery of mail and visits of commanders and VIPs. They are not employed in a strike capacity. By mutual agreement no ground attack aircraft have been used in the conflict, although the IAF went into action with its armed helicopters, MIGs and Mirage 2000 against Pakistan's Kargil intrusion in May-August 1999 with devastating effect. All such actions, however, were conducted on the Indian side of the LoC; thereby escalation to a total land-air conventional war was avoided.

An *Indian Defence Review* article of 1989 estimated the Indian casualty rate at a staggering 63 per cent of the men stationed in the Siachen, with 90 percent of that figure attributed to "non-combat casualties". Terrain, climate and the rarified atmosphere are the principal causes. Frost-bite and hypo-thermia, exacerbated by a wind-chill factor beyond human endurance, lays many a tough veteran of these parts low. Lack of oxygen, due to the low atmospheric pressure, exposes troops to "altitude sickness" resulting in dizziness, headaches, vomiting, insomnia, dehydration, heart palpitations, pulmonary embolism and pulmonary oedema. Many men suffer from psychological problems related to the physical stresses of high altitude warfare, commonly referred to as the "Siachen Syndrome".

The Siachen Glacier dispute has resulted in enormous casualties to both antagonists. This low-level war is being fought on the "highest battle field in the world", at great ill-affordable financial cost to both countries. Both countries admit they do not want to continue the conflict over this icy wasteland and yet the chances for its resolution, despite many meetings by representatives of both countries, are bleak. A *resumé* of various efforts at resolution that have taken place and the results thereof may indicate one of several courses that both sides could follow to break the dead-lock.

(to be concluded)

# India-Pakistan Reconciliation

(PART-I)

LT GEN M L CHIBBER, PVSM, AVSM (RETD)

"Pre-partition generation and youth with a global vision must act with despatch"

A wise Pakistani octogenarian

## The Overview

**D**on't come" was the advice of a life-long friend in Pakistan. "Don't go" was the advice of almost everyone we consulted in India after the invitation from the Institute of Regional Studies in Pakistan. The invitation was the culmination of the correspondence with General Pervez Musharraf, which had started when he was appointed the Army Chief in 1998.

It was a part of the ongoing mission which my wife Dr Chibber and I started on 01 September 1985, the very first day after I retired on 31 August as the Commander-in-Chief of India's Northern Command. The mission was India-Pakistan reconciliation, dedicated to the children of the two countries. We left for Lahore as planned, but were held up there due to bad weather for almost 24 hours and reached Islamabad only a day later. Of course, our 'don't come' friend was at the airport to meet us. We were received with utmost courtesy and consideration.

During the seven seminars in the Institute of Regional Studies, Strategic Studies and Policy Research at Islamabad, at the Alshafa Trust (eyes), Rawalpindi, at the Human Rights Commission, Lahore, and at Greenwich University and Independent Communication Network, Karachi, sparks did fly; most with courtesy, but a few that were blunt and off-the-hip. But these never upset us because during 15 years of this endeavour we have got used to the badgering by the Indian and Pakistani hawks. A few very rewarding

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Lt Gen M L Chibber, PVSM, AVSM retired as Army Commander. He has authored a number of books, USI Papers and biographical sketches.

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interactions need special mention. One was with a well-known religious leader who asked us to spend an evening with him but without anyone accompanying us or the information about the meeting being leaked to the press. After the initial half an hour or so, Mrs Chibber chose to go to the Zanana (ladies enclosure) to be with his family members. This gentleman was aware that Pakistan is the cradle of human spiritual thought because, as he said, the *vedas* were revealed to mankind in Gandhar and Swat Valleys near Peshawar. He mentioned that the pre-independence generation has only about ten years to help promote reconciliation, after which it would be difficult. Being a fundamentalist ideologue, he, obviously, is unaware of the emerging new world awaiting the youth of today.

The second was with the vibrant MBA students at the centre of academic excellence in Greenwich University, who responded with visible enthusiasm to the vision and reality of mankind's irreversible march to the *'unity of man, global economy and eventually earth citizenship'*.

The third was with two youth; one at Lahore airport who was on his way to Yale University for an MBA and the second, a brilliant young lady journalist who conducted our open-to-public seminar in the Independent Communication Network centre of the *Jang* newspapers at Karachi. Both talked of the mindset about India which the educational system had developed in them. The young man explained how he had broken out of it after meeting people and getting access to reading material for his graduation in the USA and showed us a book about Nehru that he was currently reading. The young lady posed a question to the five eminent Pakistani panelists and the two of us on "How to get out of this mindset". The urge in the human mind to know the *truth* is very strong and as we enter the age of Information Revolution, any attempt to place a ceiling on the human mind is not likely to work.

*We have come back strongly reinforced in our conviction that reconciliation will take place sooner than most of us think it possible. This conviction is based on the deep-down but palpable feeling in the hearts of the people of India and Pakistan. Their fundamental*

*aspiration is to improve the quality of their lives and get on with it.* It is amazing that it should be so in Pakistan, despite a conscious policy followed by the ruling elite to promote hostility. Most people were enthused to listen about the irreversible megatrend in the evolution of man for a march to the new age. The blueprint for the new age by Sai Baba was well received. In just four lines he has distilled the essence of all the faiths and philosophies that have gripped the minds of men since the dawn of history. On this planet:

*There is only one nation, the nation of humanity.*

*There is only one religion, the religion of love.*

*There is only one language, the language of heart.*

*There is only one God and He is omnipresent.*

The mindset of ideologues and policy-makers conditioned by Chanakya, Machiavelli, Morgenthau, Kissinger and the like are passé. The age of the '*balance of power*' and the predominance of *national interest* is on the way out. This trend has been lucidly articulated by Robert Bartley, the editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, about the future role of the USA.

*"Build international institutions appropriate to the world order waiting-to-be-born and manage the friction it will create. It surely does not mean creating a new United Nations or other world-government-at-a-stroke. But it may well mean a broader application of the slow, step-by-step, economic first evolution towards unity we are already witnessing in the European Community".*

Very early after we embarked on this mission in 1985, a pregnant articulation by General Zia ul Haq was conveyed to us. He said that, "hostility with India was essential for the survival of Pakistan" and added that "it was also good for India". We hoped during the visit to get to the bottom of it. All autocratic rulers, when they talk of their country, normally mean themselves or their constituency. And Zia's constituency was the Army and the fundamentalist groups. Did he have something more in mind? Participants in some of the seminars said he could not have said these words.

However, the *truth* was revealed in Khalid Ahmed's analysis titled 'Changing Perception of National Security in Pakistan' in the *Friday Times* of 04 May 2000. While alluding to Operations Gibraltar and Grand Slam which escalated into the 1965 War and ended by reverting to the *status quo ante* under the Tashkent Agreement, he observed "*Pakistan, committed to changing the status quo, adopted a posture of permanent confrontation with India... Pakistan's ideology became India centric. Its text books indoctrinated the nation in favour of security paradigm of permanent confrontation. The penal code was amended to equate opposition to the anti-India ideology with treason*". There is another factor which probably added to his hostility. It was highlighted by General Pervez Musharraf in one of his letters in our correspondence about what is needed for reconciliation, in the following words :

"When an elder in a family like bigger country displays fairness, understanding, cooperation, with its smaller neighbour for the benefit of all as opposed to domineering, imposing and patronising attitude."

We were touched by the positive response while trying to respond to General Pervez Musharraf's observation in the seminars where this aspect was touched. Almost all participants reacted with a degree of amusement and some sympathy for the Indian citizen on listening to the following explanation :

"Just as the Army has usurped the power of the state in Pakistan, it is the bureaucracy that has done the same in India. Our bureaucracy from peon, policeman and inspector right the way up, has consequently developed a mindset that is domineering, imposing (frequently extracting!) and patronising towards the Indian citizen. Unfortunately, it gets reflected when they deal with the citizens of Pakistan because you all look so much like Indians".

It was in the context of national security that we tried to explain the following paragraph from my letter to General Pervez Musharraf after he took over as the Chief Executive.



"The threat perception *manufactured* by some of your predecessors that India's goal is to establish Akhand Bharat is just not true. If it was so India would not have withdrawn from East Pakistan. My military Guru, General Attique ur Rahman tried to educate them but he was ignored".

My credentials in planning and fighting wars with Pakistan made most participants in the seminars accept the assurance that Akhand Bharat has never been the agenda of the Armed Forces or the political parties in India. But a few people did mention that "your politicians probably have a different view". It is true that politicians in the two countries have exploited the hostility factor to the hilt to whip up emotions; Benazir Bhutto has certainly written about it with regret.

Others who have a vested interest in hostility do everything in their power to project threats, which in reality do not exist. Military planners are very skillful in doing so. So are the intelligence agencies, because their bread and butter lies in hostility. It is now well accepted that the KGB and the CIA prolonged the Cold War far beyond the time when it should have ended.

It was in this context that we shared the views of Morarji Desai with some Pakistani individuals. As is well known, he slashed the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) budget by 40 per cent and developed a very good relationship with General Zia ul Haq. In a 1988 interview about India-Pakistan Reconciliation, he observed that had he stayed in power for a few more months he would have settled the Kashmir problem. He did not elaborate, but no one in the subcontinent can doubt his integrity and truthfulness.

The Kashmir problem has become the main issue in promoting this hostility. In India, fortunately, democracy has struck deep roots and the irresistible power of one-person-one-vote is not only bringing about a slow but inexorable social revolution but is also pulling all extremist elements of the right and the left to the centre. In Pakistan it is a little more difficult. While analysing 57 military coups in the world for my Ph D dissertation (published as a book titled *Military Leadership to Prevent Military Coup*, Lancer International, 1986), it

was apparent that we soldiers suffer from a misperception. We feel confident that we can fix any problem. Unfortunately, democracy cannot be fixed: it has to evolve and slowly take root in conditions so lucidly articulated by Mr Jinnah in his address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947. It is in this context that many well wishers of Pakistan are watching the current Army takeover with concern. With a history of six conspiracies and four military coups, these concerns were not lessened by three experiences in Pakistan:

- An aware businessman, where Mrs Chibber was shopping, remarked when he was told about our reconciliation mission "fauji nahin hone denge (Army will not allow it to happen)".
- A retired Army officer, in his late seventies, ruefully conveyed similar sentiments by adding "do your retired brigadiers, generals and ambassadors have the type of posh houses filled with goodies and a battery of servants like ours? They won't let it go".
- Some individuals asked us, after seminars, about our assessment of the higher leadership in the Pakistan Army. From our interactions in the USA and the UK, we are aware that questions are raised about the radicalised sections of the Army who have a rather limited understanding of the emerging world. To avoid any controversy, we limited ourselves to a brief comment that the higher leadership is as good as any in the world.

Indians and Pakistanis who wish to understand the situation in Pakistan would do well to face the *truth* of General Zia ul Haq's role during his eleven years of dictatorship. His candid and penetrating profile is contained in a monograph titled 'Zia ul Haq and I' (ICCTS Publication, Islamabad, 1977) by Colonel Abdul Qayyum who is a seeker of truth and a Professor of Islamic studies. Qayyum, a Bengali, was a sword of honour and gold medalist officer, who had the courage to resign in 1971 and yet stay on in Pakistan. Zia "cherished his friendship" but also encouraged fundamentalism by emphasis on visible practices rather than the spirit of Islam.

Notwithstanding the above indications, we are aware that there are numerous officers in the Pakistan military who genuinely believe in creating institutions that will make the dream of the Qaid articulated in his address of 11 August come true.

*"You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go your mosque or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan ... you may belong to any religion or caste or creed -- that has nothing to do with the business of state ...."*

They are also aware that the place of a good professional Army is to physically and mentally be in the barracks. An experienced politician observed that the Qaid's dream in Pakistan cannot be implemented without reforming the tribal and feudal systems prevailing in the country and this is not going to be easy. Similarly, an eminent lawyer said the Qaid should have written a constitution for Pakistan. Such interaction during the seminars and elsewhere with individuals also gave us an opportunity to discuss many major issues other than Kashmir. It is best to deal with these first.

### Partition

Most people do not like to use the word 'partition' for 1947. They prefer to refer to the event as independence. *Partition is a fact of history and it cannot and must not now be undone.* However, certain basic *truths*, if faced squarely, can help the Indian and Pakistani opinion-and policy-makers to view it with clinical detachment to accelerate the process of reconciliation. Many of us suffered and lost near and dear ones. As a cadet I had opted for Pakistan but had to change my choice when two of my uncles were hacked to death in Peshawar and my own parents escaped by taking shelter in the home of a Muslim neighbour and had to leave Pakistan. However, *collectively*, it is the Muslim community that has suffered the most as it has been fractured between three countries, with the largest segment still in India. Left leaderless, only recently have over 130 million Muslims in the country realised the immense power of one-person-one-vote and are rapidly advancing in every field. More women wear *burqa* in Delhi, Lucknow

and even Bombay than in Rawalpindi, Lahore or Karachi. The Indian tradition of many roads leading to ONE GOD is playing its role. More and more people are understanding the *role of the self-appointed marketing managers of God* and they are being marginalised. This process is being accelerated by Sai Baba's insistence that a Hindu must be a good Hindu, a Muslim a good Muslim, a Christian a good Christian, a Buddhist a good Buddhist and a Sikh a good Sikh, to graduate to spirituality. His guidance is very explicit:

"It is good to be born in a religion, but not good to die in one. Grow and rescue yourself from the limits of regulations. Doctrine, that fence in your freedom of thought, and ceremonies and rites that restrict and direct. Reach the point where Churches do not matter, where all roads end from where all roads began".

All roads begin and end in ONE GOD.

The opinion-and policy-makers will do well to study the divide-and-rule policy formalised by the British after the 1857 Revolt and then its reinforcement by their use of the same policy to control the Arabs after World War I. Then only will they appreciate the essence of some of the recently released top secret documents of the period 1939 to 1947 declassified by the British government. It would enable people to understand how the Congress and the Muslim League were manipulated by the British. The most significant of these documents is the appreciation by Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, about the British strategic interest in the subcontinent after the end of World War II in September 1945. He formulated it carefully and sent it to the Secretary of State on 06 February 1946. Its main recommendation was to partition India in order to acquire a dependable base for containing Soviet expansion and maintaining a hold on the Persian Gulf oil. Partition took place exactly the way he had recommended. Linked to it: one, the record of the discussion of the Viceroy with leaders on 04 September 1939, soon after the British declared war on Germany; two, the record of discussion between the Secretary of State, Lord Zetland and Khwaja Khaliq-u-Zaman in London, in early 1940 after the Japanese had captured Malaya; and three, those related to Stafford Cripps mission to India

soon after the Congress launched the Quit India movement to convey that quitting India after establishing Pakistan and Princethan cannot be ruled out.

### Is War Imminent?

This question was discussed with some vehemence by the participants in the auditorium of the Pakistan Human Rights Commission at Lahore, because a number of them there had just returned from India where they experienced a hostile atmosphere, particularly at Delhi. They were exercised by General Malik's statement that a limited war was possible. They were not satisfied by the explanation that the best way to prevent a war is to be fully prepared to win in all eventualities so that the adversary does not miscalculate. Since they insisted that a war was about to break out, I made a categoric statement that war will not take place. They then wanted to know the reason for this assertion. It was explained that a professional soldier after long years of management of overt and covert violence develops a judgement like the clinical sense of an experienced physician. That it was my professional judgement that a war will not break out. There were no more questions on the subject after that even if they had reservations.

### Why no to dialogue?

There were diverse questions about the repeated Indian rejection of General Pervez Musharraf's offer for a dialogue. We explained that Prime Minister Vajpayee was the best man on the subcontinent for peace. He took the courage, despite opposition, to travel to Lahore based on the purity of his instincts. Then, Operation Badr was launched at Kargil, which is considered by many in India as a *betrayal of Lahore* and by others that Lahore was a *deception plan* for Kargil. *It shattered the developing atmosphere of trust.* When Kargil erupted, Vajpayee was severely criticised, lampooned and belittled in the competitive politics of a democracy. It will take a while for tempers to cool down. Kargil was also the first television war when people saw what was happening. Incidentally, the Pakistan public is made to believe that Kargil was a great victory for the Pakistan Army, which was thrown

away by Nawaz Sharif. They are also not aware that the Kargil enquiry committee report has been published as a book in India. *Patience and perseverance are needed to get out of the current logjam. In the long run, actions speak louder than words and things are likely to be influenced by what happens on the ground; particularly the ISI controlled insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir.*

### Why did India go Nuclear?

"It forced Pakistan to follow suit. The two countries can destroy each other if the Kashmir problem is not solved". The concerned people on this issue fell into three categories.

- Those extremely worried about a nuclear holocaust.
- It is like a 'bandar ke hath mein ustra (a cut throat razor in the hand of a monkey)'.
- 'We can trap your Army in Kashmir and destroy it'. Obviously theoretical strategists.

These observations gave us an opportunity to explain my strong views on this issue. For years I was the lone voice in India (and much maligned) who openly advocated at Delhi, Islamabad, Washington and Kiev that India and Pakistan must acquire nuclear capability. Besides the reason of our long common history of over 2500 years of wars with outsiders, the main reason for this belief was my understanding of the psychology of power. The curse of nuclear weapons will not be eradicated from the planet as long as the five 'have' powers retain a monopoly over these weapons. Nuclear weapons would go only through the route of proliferation. It was with some satisfaction that we read on Pakistani soil the news of *unequivocal commitment* by the five 'have' powers to eliminate all nuclear weapons. Even though they gave no time-frame, the declaration is a major break-through for mankind. I also repeated the statement at Kiev during a UN Conference on preventing a nuclear war: "India and Pakistan are ancient civilisations and we can work out our own *bullock cart* system of communications to prevent a nuclear war by accident".

### Why 28 per cent Jump in the Indian Defence Budget?

This recurring question gave an opportunity to share the results of my long years of research. Any developing country that exceeds 3 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence even with border problems, creates for itself serious economic problems in the future. It also becomes prone to military coups. Similarly, even a developed country that exceeded 5 per cent of the GDP on defence creates economic problems for itself. The USSR collapsed because for long years it exceeded, in a big way, the 5 per cent limit to match the American military might when America had five times bigger GDP. Even the huge budgetary deficit which President Clinton inherited was due to excessive spending on defence by Presidents Reagan and Bush. On the other hand, if it falls below 3 per cent of the GDP in a developing country with adversaries on its borders it runs into problem. For example, for the first fifteen years after independence, the Indian defence budget was less than 2 per cent of the GDP. As a result, Indians were squarely thrashed by the Chinese in 1962.

There is yet another factor. Indians in their folly have acquired the second most expensive manning system for the armed forces in the whole world. They spend almost 67 per cent of their defence budget on manpower related costs. This leaves very little for needs like replacement of weapons and equipment, maintenance, training, spares and modernisation. Even in a rich country like the USA, alarm bells ring when manpower related costs exceed 50 per cent of the defence budget. The squeeze on the defence budget in India during the eighties and nineties reduced defence spending to almost 2.3 per cent of the GDP, thus leaving huge gaps in fitness for war. These gaps came to light during the Kargil conflict. It will take a while to make up for the years of neglect if the defence budget is pegged to 3 per cent of the GDP.

It was heartening to note that participants in the seminars who understood economics, correctly guessed that the gold medallists in the faulty manning system for armed forces are Pakistanis who spend almost 70 per cent of their defence budget on manpower related costs.



A singular pleasure was the success in searching and meeting my platoon commander at the IMA, Colonel SGS Mehdi. We affectionately called him 'Killer Mehdi' because of his obsession with Jahngez Khan. During the nineties I was in touch with him on a basic difference in our perceptions. His brilliant analysis of history convinced him that India and some other countries must fragment into numerous nation states. My perception about the evolution of mankind suggested that we were on an irreversible march towards the age of a global village. It was a privilege to spend a few hours with him and listen to how his many predictions had come true. He was concerned about a nuclear holocaust in the subcontinent but was a much mellowed man. He wanted to know more about Sai Baba. Later a friend opined that perhaps Mehdi's change is because he is Shia. The Shias are being targeted by the internal sectarian violence.

(To be concluded)

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## India and the Norwegian Peace Efforts in Sri Lanka

R KANNAN

In November 2000 Erik Solheim, the Norwegian facilitator in the Sri Lankan talks came to India to brief Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh about his ground breaking meeting with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran and his efforts for a cease-fire between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government. There are indications that India is not greatly enthused by the Norwegians gaining a role, albeit a facilitating one, in its neighbourhood. However, it has little choice but to stomach it. The Tigers say they are inclined towards a cease-fire though the Sri Lankan Government is in no hurry to oblige before a basic political understanding is reached with its adversary. If the Tigers are aiming to use this break, as they have done in the past, to recoup and strengthen militarily it would be another tragic mistake on their part. Despite the LTTE's shaky history of keeping promises, India should use its good offices to persuade the Chandrika Kumaratunga Government to adopt flexibility so that the Norwegian initiative gains momentum.

Only a negotiated settlement in Sri Lanka could protect India's interests. Despite the past failures in the search for peace, the Norwegian initiative is the first serious attempt by an outside third party. Despite India's traditional wariness to the involvement of outsiders in South Asia, its self-perceived zone of influence, the Norwegian initiative may be the best alternative to its own involvement. Late premiers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi enunciated a tacit security doctrine for South Asia that provided a regional policeman's role for India. Though a decade has passed since their demise, the doctrine still seems to be the guiding principle for India's foreign policy architects. Notwithstanding this India should support the Norwegian peace efforts wholeheartedly not only

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because it is purely diplomatic in nature (as opposed to a military role of the other outsiders in the past which India disapproved of), but because its federal polity and sensitivities in the southern state of Tamil Nadu leave it with little manoeuvring space.

### **Why India refused help?**

In May 2000 India turned down Sri Lanka's request to evacuate more than 20,000 soldiers stranded on the island's northern peninsula. The rejection came despite the prospects of the peninsula's capital town Jaffna, also the cultural capital of the island's Tamils, falling into rebel hands. The issue of control was, however, more than symbolic. To Sri Lanka, Tiger control of the peninsula would mark an agonising return to the days of its loss of sovereignty over the north. To India, the development could renew long-term concerns for its stability, if not unity. The Tigers' ascent thus bodes ill for both Sri Lanka and India.

Then why did India refuse help? The issue is complex, but some, if not most, of the answers could be found in Tamil Nadu, where 60 million Tamils with ethnic ties to Sri Lanka's Tamils live. The state's Chief Minister Karunanidhi of the regional Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) was firm against military assistance or intervention in Sri Lanka and argued that India cannot aid "the killing of Tamils." What if Sri Lanka was to approach Pakistan or China, traditional Indian adversaries? Karunanidhi said that his recommendation to the federal government stood.

As expected, the Sri Lankan Government did just that. Following India's rejection it turned to Pakistan, Israel and others for help. Without specifying the exact nature of the request, Pakistan nonetheless rejected Sri Lanka's call, possibly owing to logistical and other constraints. But it is believed to be selling multi-barrel rocket launchers and other weaponry to an arms-starved Sri Lankan Army. The development cannot be to India's liking but New Delhi has to put up with it because of Tamil Nadu's injunction. Is the tail Tamil Nadu wagging the India dog?

### **The influence of regional parties**

India used to be led by one party both at the federal level and

in the states. Circumstances have since changed with strong regional parties becoming critical for government formation at the federal level. Consequently, they have acquired a say in charting federal policy more so when their interests are at stake. The DMK is an important constituent of the federal coalition government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). There cannot be two more dissimilar parties brought into a coalition by electoral considerations. On the ethnic issue, the rightist BJP, like its opponents – the Congress, the centrist and left parties with a broader Indian presence – sees Sri Lanka's unity as the framework in which Tamil aspirations should be realised. India's own difficulties in Kashmir and the Northeast make this advocacy a self-preserving stratagem. On the other hand, the DMK as a Tamil nationalist party accords primacy to Tamil interests sometimes over that of Sri Lanka's territorial integrity which explains Karunanidhi's recent call for a Czech-Slovakia style peaceful partition of the island as a last measure. This stand of the party is also somewhat forced by its competition with its opponent the All India Anna DMK (AIADMK), another Tamil nationalist party. Thus in their political one-upmanship neither the DMK nor the AIADMK can be seen as sanctioning an Indian policy that even remotely appears to disfavour the Tamils.

As the two most popular parties of the state, the DMK and the AIADMK have shaped India's Sri Lanka policy at critical junctures. India's involvement in the ethnic issue in 1983 was a direct response to their demands upon the then federal government led by Indira Gandhi. As the two parties effectively portrayed Tamil Nadu's outrage over the 1983 riots in Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was forced to abandon New Delhi's age-old policy of treating the ethnic issue as "internal." The DMK, then the opposition in the state, demanded a Cyprus style military intervention. Indira Gandhi appears to have considered emulating her decisive intervention in East Pakistan, which led to the creation of Bangladesh. Also, she was concerned about reports of foreign involvement in Sri Lanka. But the idea was not pursued because of the larger Indian belief that a Tamil state in Sri Lanka could attract Tamil Nadu into a pan-Tamil association (Tamil Nadu had sought secession in the fifties and sixties). Instead, supported by her popular ally, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MG Ramachandran of the AIADMK,

Indira Gandhi proposed a 'good offices role' for India, meeting both Tamil Nadu's demands and India's strategic/regional concerns half way. Analysts dubbed it the 'Indira doctrine', which proscribed countries of the region from seeking outside help and prescribing that they first approach India.

Any Indian interventionist role in Sri Lanka thus needs to be sanctioned by India's domestic Tamil constituency. But is aiding the Sri Lankan forces against the Tigers an anti-Tamil move? Except for the two junior federal coalition partners from Tamil Nadu who are unabashed Tiger supporters, nobody else is making that specious argument. Nonetheless, there is tacit realisation that the elimination of the Tigers may actually remove the only pressure on any Sri Lankan Government to grant the Tamils their legitimate rights. The dilemma is that the Tigers are politically very immature and have never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity. Further, in their quest to be the sole leaders of the Tamils they continue to ruthlessly annihilate all other shades of Tamil opinion. Their contempt for human life, be it of their critics or even their own is well known (a recent study has found that the Tigers had used more than 180 suicide bombers so far). Indian Tamil revulsion with them grew complete when in the summer of 1991 the Tigers were implicated in the murder of Rajiv Gandhi.

All this should have made the Tigers by now irrelevant at least in Sri Lanka and their support in Tamil Nadu *passe*. Ironically, the Sri Lankan Government's inability to reach majority Sinhala consensus to devolve power to the Tamil areas has kept the Tigers in business in Sri Lanka. In Tamil Nadu the passage of time could have weakened an already short public memory of the Tigers' ways. Thus despite the fact that the Tigers have not emerged from a democratic selection, there is consensus in Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu and India that no solution can exclude the Tigers.

### **Rajiv Gandhi's policy**

With a massive parliamentary majority Rajiv Gandhi was clearly less dependent on Tamil Nadu than his mother or any of his successors. Also, unlike his mother Rajiv Gandhi did not want to toe

a blatant Tamil line. The young prime minister therefore told Sri Lanka's President Jayewardene in the margins of his mother's funeral in 1984 that New Delhi intended to be neutral and not be guided by Tamil Nadu. However, reverses in the state elections and the absence of progress on Sri Lanka gradually made Gandhi politically vulnerable.

Like his mother Rajiv Gandhi also had to depend on the moderate Chief Minister Ramachandran, ironically a Tiger benefactor in his Sri Lankan expedition. However, Tamil Nadu public opinion sometimes checked this support from Ramachandran. For instance, Jaffna almost fell to Sri Lankan forces in 1987. Gandhi's government could not afford to stand by and watch as Tamil Nadu, including Ramachandran, demanded action. Threatening to reverse India's policies, Gandhi bluntly told Jayewardene to give up the military campaign. Jaffna was consequently 'saved.' That summer, over Colombo's objections, India dropped food by air to Sri Lanka's north fearing that Tamil Nadu might otherwise act on its own. In July 1987 the Indo-Lanka Accord was signed between Gandhi and Jayewardene.

The Tigers soon proved that they might be good at waging war but not peace. Their recalcitrance soon left Gandhi with no choice but to engage his troops to disarm them. Further, as the Tigers balked at every democratic initiative, Gandhi heeded to his intelligence agencies and installed a puppet regime in Sri Lanka's North-east. Even his ailing ally Ramachandran was not pleased with these developments. However, popular Indian Tamil disillusionment with the Tigers gave Gandhi a tepid mandate to continue the policy.

Ironically, it was the Jayewardene government's unwillingness to keep up its commitment under the accord that vindicated the Tigers own vacillation. Like all puppets, the puppets in the North-east soon became a liability for India. Conscious of all these complexities, Gandhi kept an open line with the Tigers even as his military continued to chase them.

This dual track approach of talking while fighting nonetheless

failed as a known anti-India leader Premadasa succeeded the ambivalent Jayewardene as Sri Lanka's President. The Tigers and Premadasa quickly closed ranks to demand an Indian exit. In a bizarre twist, Premadasa reportedly also provided arms to his Tiger nemesis to fight the Indians. With Ramachandran's demise, Gandhi approached the DMK, now the ruling party in the state, to wean the Tigers away from Premadasa promising 'even Eelam if necessary.' The move was not followed up and the DMK maintains that traditional fears of the Indian establishment that Eelam could ultimately unravel India botched the plan. Nonetheless, it is unclear how much influence the DMK would have had on the Tigers. Even Ramachandran, who enjoyed a unique personal equation with the Tiger supremo Prabhakaran, frequently realised the limits of his influence over the maverick.

### **Disengagement from Sri Lanka**

In late 1989 the National Front Government with the DMK as a constituent replaced Rajiv Gandhi's federal government. The new government lost no time in declaring that India would never commit troops again. When the last Indian troops came home in 1990 India had lost more than 1,000 soldiers.

A last minute peace initiative in early 1990 mid-wifed by the DMK failed as the Tigers refused to become a part of the democratic process. Expectedly, they soon fell out with Premadasa and renewed hostilities sent shiploads of refugees into Tamil Nadu once again. But Indian policy had spent itself and had had enough of the Tigers. Besides, in the absence of any pressure from Tamil Nadu, Indian policy quietly reverted to its pre-1983 stand of treating the issue as "internal."

But Tamil Nadu was not finished with the Tigers. Tiger activities of gun running and violence in Tamil Nadu in 1990-1991 began to pose a threat to the very stability of India's South. The National Front Government's successor accused Karunanidhi of aiding the Tigers and simply dismissed his government.

### **What India could do**

Soon Rajiv Gandhi himself was cruelly killed by a suspected



Tiger suicide bomber. Popular revulsion in Tamil Nadu for the Tigers became complete. Since then for a decade India has been able to stay aloof from the Sri Lankan crisis. Karunanidhi has made it unequivocal that there would be no room for the Tigers in Tamil Nadu. Notwithstanding this any Indian help to the Sri Lankan forces faces the risk of being read as a betrayal of the Tamils.

So what are the options before India? The current strength of the Tigers is not necessarily a disadvantage for India so long as its Navy can protect its borders from any Tiger infiltration. Instead, it presents India the first serious opportunity, since its decade-old disengagement, to impress on the Sri Lankan Government to grant the Tamils their due. Similarly, for the Sri Lankan Government this adversity is an opportunity to forge majority consensus on an issue that if left to fester could seriously jeopardise the island's unity further. For India the resolution of the ethnic issue will stem the growth of fringe Tamil nationalist elements in Tamil Nadu from gaining currency.

India has correctly excluded a role for itself now. Yet with its interests at stake, New Delhi is closely monitoring the developments. India has shunned the Tigers since Rajiv Gandhi's murder and has banned them. But if it aspires for a lasting resolution in its backyard its past experience should not limit it. Instead that experience could help New Delhi to be more realistic with both the Sri Lankan parties. All parties are ten years older and therefore hopefully wiser. The Sri Lankan Government has already said it desires an Indian role. India therefore should play a discreet but decisive role in helping the Sri Lankan Government to be pragmatic with the Tigers. The Tigers' recent military successes have unwittingly strengthened the Norwegian initiative. India too should do its part. For, the search for a negotiated settlement is worth as many attempts as it takes.

## Indo-British Relations into the First Quarter of the 21st Century

SIR ROB YOUNG, KCMG

For the first 40 years or so after India's independence, 'systematic nurturing' would not be an accurate way of describing how London and Delhi approached the Indo-British relationship. Look, for example, at trade. By 1965, Britain was still exporting only £116 million worth of goods to India. Exports did not top £500 million until 1980. However, of greater relevance is the political backdrop to the first four decades from 1947. I leave aside the unique sensitivities resulting from the period of British rule. They may have been an inhibiting factor at times. Let me focus more on India's international stance. It may well be the case that in the first few years India wanted to forge a new, preferential relationship with the West. Even though, thanks to Nehru's tough but farsighted attitude, the Commonwealth was effectively reshaped to include the new Republic of India, the West may collectively have missed a real opportunity with India in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

But certainly from the second half of the 1950s to the end of the Cold War, the view in the West was that India was not on the West's side. Non-alignment did not strike many in the West as a detached and balanced approach to international challenges. I remember a senior colleague in the Foreign Office saying to me sometime in the 1980s: "I cannot think of a single international issue on which Britain and India have been on the same side for over 20 years." I have not done a detailed enough analysis of international history from the 1950s onwards to know whether that view was strictly accurate. But it was certainly the perception that India's sympathies lay with the Soviet Union, with the "other side". Put another way, non-alignment might have been a fine principle in theory. But the practice seemed to imply that it was impossible to

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Excerpted from the talk delivered at the United Service Institution of India on 15 March 2000.

Sir Rob Young, KCMG is High Commissioner of Britain in India.

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achieve. The prevailing view in the West was reinforced by the centralised, planned, socialist-style economy that India followed after independence, with the clear element of economic interdependence with the Soviet Union.

With the end of the Cold War, there had to be a change – and a change for the better in the eyes of most Western countries. With the collapse of Soviet communism and the disintegration of the Soviet empire, India had to re-think its approach to international affairs. This, combined with the financial crisis of 1991 which brought a wave of economic reforms to the Indian economy, happily provided new incentives and new opportunities for Western countries, including the United Kingdom (UK), to reappraise its relationship with India. Those opportunities were seized. For the UK, 1993 saw a new, structured political dialogue in place and the establishment of the Indo-British Partnership to provide an umbrella stimulus to trade and investment. Since then we have seen trade quadruple and investment grow fifteenfold.

That re-appraisal was, of course, made easier by the fact of India's democracy. Your and my country share similar institutions and values – which I don't need to reiterate before this audience. What is slightly surprising to me is that those shared institutions and values did not provide a sufficient reassurance to British governments from the 1950s to the 1980s to enable the relationship to flourish more in that period.

So much for the past. Before I look at the future opportunities for co-operation between India and Britain, I should like to dwell for a moment on the challenge of change. It is the same for countries the world over today. When talking about globalisation in a recent speech in London, Robin Cook said:

If you asked me whether I am in favour of globalisation, I would say that my attitude to globalisation is much the same as my attitude to the dawn. On balance, I think it is a good thing that the sun rises every day. But I also know there is nothing I can do to stop it even if I wanted to. Similarly, the only rational response to globalisation is to pursue strategies that maximise benefits and minimise damage.

Globalisation impacts not just on economics, but also on politics. Prime Minister Tony Blair recently set out five elements likely to characterise those nations that will be successful in the new millennium.

(1) They will be highly flexible and adaptable, able to meet the challenge of the pace of change. E-Commerce, the internet, mass communication, will release a flood of technological change. Economic change will bring social change. Countries that allow interest groups, old practices, old fashioned dogma or ideology to stand in their way will fall behind. Those countries that look on change as an ally, and then seek to manage its consequences, and maximise its opportunities will prosper. Reform is the key to progress.

(2) The successful nations will see education as the key economic and social imperative for us all. The race for educational excellence for all – not just an elite – is on. In the knowledge-based economy, human capital is our chief resource. Developing it should be our national purpose for the 21st Century.

(3) A successful nation will develop new bonds of connection, of community. Even though today's world is individualised and diversity in lifestyle so much more prevalent, people need communities. People need to feel a sense of belonging. With greater individual freedom, people will seek social responsibility and connection.

(4) Countries will be driven to co-operate more across national boundaries. In a nuclear age, with more countries achieving nuclear capability, we shall need better systems of international security, better channels of dialogue for peace. Today, conflicts rarely stay local. Global finance, international trade, developing world debt, environmental pollution – all of us are afflicted by these phenomena. Only global solutions will work.

(5) Nations that succeed will be tolerant, respectful of diversity, multi-racial, multi-cultural societies. Faith is important for people and will remain so. But faith is at its most powerful when allied to reason and tolerance.

These were Tony Blair's words on the eve of the new

millennium. I believe that they should strike a chord in India. Of course, it does not take a particularly acute observer of the international scene to note the differences between the UK and India. Geographical size, population size, level of development – yes they are different. But the ingredients for success in the new millennium are going to be the same. I believe India has a great future. It has to be one of the great powers of the 21st Century.

Our two countries have a major aspiration in common: to play a lead role on the international stage. Both our countries have global interests to defend and promote; both our countries believe that we have qualities and assets to offer the world. Let me look at just two aspects.

### **Economy**

No country can aspire to a world role without being economically strong. It is possible to do quite a lot by clever diplomacy. It is also possible to do a lot by strong leadership – projecting a country overseas by sheer force of personality. But in the end, it is economic weight which allows a country to exercise influence beyond its borders. Without that economic weight, international aspirations cannot be sustained. India and the UK will be among the top 10 economies in the 21st Century.

The British economy is in excellent shape. We have broken the cycle of boom and bust. We have conquered the scourge of inflation. To cite some statistics:

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew 0.8 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1999, underlining the acceleration in activity which began at the start of the year.
- Growth is forecast to rise to 2.5 to 3 per cent in 2000.
- Service sector output growth continues to accelerate, up 2.9 per cent on last year.
- Manufacturing output has now grown by almost 2 per cent since 1998.
- Forward-looking business surveys indicate that activity will continue to strengthen.

- The UK now has a healthy budget surplus of about £10 billion.
- More people are now in work in Britain than ever before. Employment averaged 27.5 million in the three months to October. Employment has increased by over 800,000 since the last election. The vacancy/unemployment ratio remains at record levels.

Turning to the Indian economy, we see similar encouraging signs:

- GDP growth of nearly 6 per cent is expected this year.
- Inflation is exceptionally low, at around 2 per cent.
- Foreign exchange reserves are at a high level, around \$35 billion.
- The stock market is buoyant, having gone up by well over 50 per cent in 1999.
- Exports grew by 12 per cent during the second half of 1999 against the same period the previous year.
- A raft of new economic legislation was passed in the first few weeks of the new government, the winter session of parliament. This – and in particular the IRDA Bill – give a strong signal to the outside world that the government means business on economic reform.
- The budget also contained a number of positive elements. For instance, by reaffirming the Government's commitment to privatisation and by making moves towards further liberalising the capital account. We were also pleased to see the cap on Foreign Institutional Investors equity holding in a company raised from 30 to 40 per cent.

## **Democracy**

The second major ingredient which will underpin nations in the

21st Century is democracy. The battle of ideas which raged in the 20th Century – between fascism, communism and democracy – has been well and truly won. Democracy has been shown to be the best – or, at any rate, the least bad – system. This was not won by force of arms, but because it most effectively responds to the needs and fundamental human rights of individual citizens around the world. Europe may lay claim to having been the source of this political creed. But the fact that it has spread so convincingly is a sure sign that it is what people want. In this context, India has been – and remains – a remarkable beacon. India is not only the world's largest democracy, it is also one of the most flexible and resilient. In the half century since independence, you have shown that it is possible to forge political unity in an astonishingly diverse political entity. You have made federalism work on the largest scale. And you have done so through democracy, through giving every man and woman the vote in a way which has led them to feel a conscious and determining part of a political whole. That has helped to forge a sense of nationhood in this country. It will continue to cement it.

So, these are the fundamentals – strong economy, strong democracy – on which India and Britain together face the new millennium and on which they build their aim to be global players. The challenge for the Indo-British relationship is to find ways of working together – rather than separately – towards that goal.

We have opened a new chapter in the bilateral relationship: our two Prime Ministers have agreed that a new, intensive phase in our relations should begin. And it has. Since last November we have had three highly successful Ministerial visits to India by Mr Peter Hain, Mr John Prescott, and Mr Stephen Byers. In the other direction, Mr Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister, went to London in January. He had talks – which I attended – with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Robin Cook. Both of them described the relationship as "excellent". It has grown from strength to strength over the last few months. It is now solid enough again to enable us to look forward to ways in which we can meet the heightened expectations.



From my perspective, there are several areas where India and Britain need to co-operate, for the benefit of both our peoples and to international benefit.

### **Peace and Stability**

No country can flourish to its full potential under the threat of war. We have devised systems in the past 50 years for managing conflict at global and regional levels. The United Nations (UN), for all its shortcomings, has proved a valuable forum for settling disputes and for enhancing security. We need to strengthen the UN and all it stands for. The debate on humanitarian intervention divides our two countries at present. But it will go on. I firmly believe that Britain and India have a prime role in setting the direction and tone of UN deliberations.

Regional security remains threatened, whether in Europe or in South Asia. In the past year we have had the fighting in Kosovo, and more recently in Chechnya. We have regional security mechanisms in place in Europe. They are not always successful in preventing conflicts. They will, in my view, be increasingly successful in settling them. In South Asia, India's relations with Pakistan remain the key to stability. The UK admired – publicly – India's restraint during the Kargil conflict last summer. The military coup in Pakistan, which the UK continues to condemn, has not brought a negotiated settlement nearer.

The situation between India and Pakistan is regarded by many observers as as dangerous as it has been at any time for the last 30 years. Western governments, including my own, are very worried at the combination of: high levels of cross-border firing (at least for this time of the year) and attacks on the Line of Control (LoC), increased numbers of militants crossing the LoC with sophisticated weaponry and operating in the Valley, high civilian and military casualties, lack of direct communication at political level between the two countries, much public rhetoric about the prospect of war, and above all the looming overt presence of nuclear weapons on both sides.

By any standards, this is a potentially explosive mix. It is hardly surprising that the outside world was alarmed by Kargil and

is alarmed by the current build-up. Casual public talk of nuclear war makes one wonder if those who utter such words really understand the devastating nature of nuclear war. We are not simply talking about larger bombs. We are talking about a qualitatively different type of military exchange with horrifying, uncontrollable consequences.

Nuclear deterrent logic seems to have been turned on its head in South Asia. In Europe, the danger of hostilities escalating from conventional to nuclear level meant that throughout the Cold War conventional war between nations was shunned. The danger was reduced to near zero. In South Asia, however, within a year of India's and Pakistan's nuclear tests, Pakistan launched a limited conventional offensive in Kargil, apparently calculating that the existence of nuclear weapons on both sides would inhibit India from escalating the fighting. In other words, that the nuclear umbrella made it *more* rather than *less* possible to take risks at the conventional level.

I also have difficulty with the notion of a "limited conventional war" between nuclear powers. The theory seems to be that you can rely on both sides to recognise when the nuclear threshold has been reached and not to cross it. I have to say that seems a hazardous and unreliable proposition to me. It is the apparent lack of checks in the current situation which worries me most. Both sides seem to be relying on the innate commonsense of the other to avoid a serious military situation developing. Doesn't the confrontation demand more active management than that? If the situation on the ground began to get out of hand, I think we would fairly quickly see outside powers seeking to intervene not only to stop the fighting but to insist on serious talks, including on the Kashmir dispute itself. The Indian position on outside intervention is well known and respected. Last year, over Kargil, India had the satisfaction of international support. If India is not to find itself under international pressure in its turn, there seems to me to be a strong case for defusing the current tension through a serious attempt to resume negotiations. The Indian government insists on the need for a signal from Pakistan over support for cross-border terrorism if *meaningful* negotiations are to take place. In the wake

of Kargil and the breakdown of the Lahore process, that is entirely understandable. But as we enter the new millennium, there will be an increasing emphasis – worldwide – on conflict prevention. In the case of India and Pakistan, I suggest that should also mean a negotiated end to one of the most dangerous bilateral disputes remaining on this globe.

Although I have included these comments under a section on bilateral co-operation, don't get me wrong: I'm not suggesting that the UK should mediate. Our position on that is entirely clear: India and Pakistan should reach a durable and just settlement through bilateral negotiations in the interests of the people of Kashmir. The UK would only get involved if both sides want us to. But that does not mean that the UK does not have views about the urgency of a settlement.

### **Global Issues**

One of the greatest sources of tension between countries is terrorism. India and the UK have both suffered from terrorism. The UK condemns terrorism in all its forms, whatever the source, whatever the motive. At their meeting in January, Jaswant Singh and Robin Cook resolved to continue to fight terrorism together. Co-operation between our two countries in this area – which began as a result of the Sikh terrorist threat in the 1980s – is strong. Together we need to give a lead internationally. Only international efforts will produce the desired effect.

There are many other global issues on which Britain and India are consulting and co-operating: reform of the international financial architecture, trade policy (managing the consequences of failure in Seattle was one of the main themes of Stephen Byers' recent visit), the environment (and in particular climate change), human rights. These are going to be key issues for the world as a whole this century. The UK and India have recognised that. I believe that we have a joint responsibility to make a difference in all these areas.

We all need India in the international mainstream on global issues, playing a positive and pro-active role in all international fora where such issues are pursued. Without a strong, forward Indian presence in all these negotiations, global objectives cannot be met. We shall all benefit the more India engages. The UK and India not

only have a joint responsibility to work together and make a difference: we should also have a joint determination.

### **Development**

The UK is proud to be assisting India in meeting its development goals. The value of UK development assistance in 1999 was around £100 million. That is set to rise quickly over the next two to three years to over £150 million. There can be no more important task than to eradicate poverty and raise living standards. The new Indian government has set itself ambitious goals. The UK is working in partnership with the Union government and with a number of State governments to help achieve those goals.

### **Culture and Education**

I referred earlier to education as the key economic and social imperative for nations in the 21st Century. We have to unlock the talents of our peoples. India has shown its brilliant conceptual capabilities in its contribution to the Information Technology (IT) revolution. In an increasingly knowledge-based world economy, India should be in its element.

India is the British Council's largest operation. It exists principally to disseminate knowledge. Over 17,000 people a day use British Council libraries in India. Those libraries now also have cyber-centres giving members direct access to the internet. The British Council has set up a nationwide database for development work, called Indev. Over 6,000 Indian students will study in the UK this year. Education remains central to the bilateral agenda.

### **Trade and Investment**

I hardly need to underline the importance we attach to developing trade and investment with India. I spend half my time on that. The 1990s have seen steady growth. The Indo-British Partnership has been a great success. Two-way trade in goods and services now stands at over £4 billion. The UK is India's second largest trading partner. When he was here recently, Stephen Byers set out an ambitious new target for growth in trade – to £5

billion soon. He also wants to see 200 new joint ventures between small and medium sized British and Indian firms within the next two years. I believe we shall manage it: the potential for growth is enormous.

Similarly, Indian investment in the UK is growing. Around 200 Indian firms are now present in my country. Of the most recent 120 that have been set up, over half are in the info-tech sector – thus vividly underlining the importance of this new sector to India. It is a fine example of joint entrepreneurship.

Here is India capitalising on its human, intellectual skills to give the Indian economy the boost it needs as we enter the 21st Century. This is in tune with what we know will be the motor of economic growth worldwide this century – human capital. We need to invest in it nationally, and bilaterally.

The bilateral agenda is vast, but not daunting in view of the joint determination shown by our two governments and the goodwill shown by our two peoples towards each other. That is one of the things that has struck me most since I came to India a year ago. There is an immense fund of goodwill here towards the UK. It is nourished in part by the Indian community in the UK. That community has a growing role to play in the development of our relations. I have personally not found it difficult to tap into the fund of goodwill. It underpins the partnership between our two countries which will characterise the approach to the new millennium.

But that goodwill needs constant renewal. I have referred to the number of Indian students in the UK this year. Part of the answer lies in attracting more and more of the younger generation to the UK. But there is an issue here of image and perception. While many young Indians see Britain as creative and innovative, they see the United States as even more so. The US has this image of a dynamic, fast-developing economy which allows foreign talent to flourish. Britain is still seen by too many Indians as traditional in its ways and outlook. We have to change that. This is not the moment for me to wax eloquent on the virtues of modern Britain. But virtues there are – and part of my job is to project them to India. To alter the image, and to remove misperceptions.

Misperceptions exist on the other side too. I sometimes have a feeling that many Indians regard India as misunderstood by the outside world. If only foreigners would take the trouble to understand India properly, all would be well. But countries themselves are responsible for the image they project overseas – and for correcting it, if it does not further their national interests. I think it undeniable that India *does* have an image problem overseas. It is still too often seen as a country of extremes, caught between post-Raj exoticism and abject poverty. I am not sure how far tourism dilutes the image. More important for Indian interests is the perception of India as a difficult country to do business in, throwing up administrative and bureaucratic hurdles to the signing of contracts, joint ventures etc – indeed with an ambivalent attitude to foreign direct investment born of widespread suspicion of what might be termed foreign commercial imperialism. So both countries have images to change and misperceptions to overcome.

Nonetheless, I am confident that the partnership between Britain and India will thrive and set an example to countries round the world of how two nations, both with a great history, both built on democratic values, both with a global vision, can co-operate together to their mutual benefit, and to the benefit of the international community as a whole. The prospect is an exciting one.

#### RESULTS OF THE USI GOLD MEDAL ESSAY COMPETITION 2000

##### 1. Group 'A' - Open to All Officers. "Exploitation of Space for Military Purposes - An Indian Experience".

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|-----|--|--|
| (a) | Col AK Lal<br>Army HQ, New Delhi         | First Prize - Gold Medal, cash award of Rs. 5,000 and entry accepted for publication in the USI Journal. |
| (b) | Maj Suyash Sharma<br>54 Inf Div Sig Regt | Second Prize - Cash award of Rs. 2,500.  |

##### 2. Group 'B' - Open to all officers upto the rank of Major or equivalent ranks in the Navy and the Air Force with not more than ten years service. "The Challenges for Junior Leaders in the Next Decade".

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|-----|---|---|
| (a) | Lt Balakrishnan Gurumurthy<br>IN, INS Anjadip | First Prize - Gold Medal, cash award of Rs. 5,000/-, entry accepted for publication in the USI Journal. |
| (b) | Capt V Guleria<br>CME                         | Second Prize - Cash award of Rs. 2,500/-.   |

#### CONSOLATION PRIZES

##### 3. Group 'B-2' - "Emerging Regimes of the Ocean and Exploitation of Ocean Resources".

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Capt JPS Johal<br>MCEME | Cash award of Rs. 1,000/-. |
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##### 4. Group 'B-3' - "Evolving Joint Operations Doctrine".

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|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Capt Dhanajeet Huidrom<br>2/8 GR | Cash award of Rs. 1,000/-. |
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## **Trans-Regional Movements of Populations : Implications for India's Security**

**LT GEN S K SINHA, PVSM (RETD)**

**F**rom the dawn of history, trans-regional, trans-national and trans-continental movements of populations have been a recurring theme. The arrival of Aryans in India was an example of one such movement. During the pre-historic period, they laid the foundations of a civilisation, which is today the only surviving ancient civilisation of the world. In the ancient period, there were waves of invading armies and with them followed trans-regional movements of population. The ancient period of Indian history was an era of assimilation. The foreigners who came into India got fully assimilated with the Indian people, adopting their religion, culture and civilisation. They lost their separate identity. In the medieval period, India faced successive Islamic invasions and with it also trans-regional movement of population. The medieval period was more of co-existence than assimilation. The newcomers retained their religion and culture, and spread them among a large section of the people of this country. Despite early hiccups and violence in the wake of invasions, the medieval era witnessed the flowering of what is called a composite culture.

The start of the modern period witnessed the establishment of a colonial empire with no significant movement of population. However, Western education and ideologies became dominant features in the country. The early Twentieth Century witnessed the growth of communalism. The British took advantage of this and initiated their 'Divide and Rule' policy. The Partition of the country in 1947 was the outcome of these developments; several lakhs of people were killed in the holocaust and over a crore people got uprooted from their homes. This became the largest movement of population in the history of mankind. Our Chairman of this meeting

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Excerpted from the Colonel Pyara Lal Memorial Lecture 2000 delivered on 29 September 2000.

Lt Gen S K Sinha, PVSM (Retd) is the Governor of Assam.

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today (Former Prime Minister I K Gujral) was a part of that movement of population. This massive movement of population from both sides did not pose any threat to the security of either country.

Along with immigration into India over the centuries, there has also been considerable emigration from our country to different parts of the world. Initially Indians went out as torch bearers of their civilisation. On the arrival of the British the movement of Indians commenced as indentured labour to countries like Mauritius, Fiji, Trinidad, South Africa and so on. In Mauritius and Trinidad they came to form the majority population and in Fiji, a very large minority. Today, we have 30 million Indians scattered all over the world of which 1.5 million are in the USA. The Indian Diaspora, if one can so call it, has not had any bearing on India's security nor on the security of the countries adopted by these Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).

Movements of populations also took place in other parts of the world. Starting from the late medieval period, there was a rush to go to the New World. Two new continents had been discovered, the Americas and Australia, and these got populated reducing the indigenous populace to insignificance. These movements of populations, bringing about a sea change in the demography of these continents, came in the wake of military invasions or were based on superior military strength. There was plenty of vacant land which could absorb the immigrants.

With the availability of land getting restricted due to population explosion and with the emergence of Nation-States with defined national boundaries, movement of population has acquired a new dimension. Another feature has been that with improved means of communications and large-scale interaction of peoples of different countries with each other, the world is heading towards becoming a global village.

Reverting to our country, in 1947 the movement of population in the West was a deluge which lasted a few months and new lines got drawn based on a religious divide. In the East the movement of population was of a different kind. It has been lingering for over half a century and continues to this day. There have been both

religious and economic compulsions behind this movement. At the time of Partition, the Hindu population was 27 per cent in East Pakistan. It got reduced to 14 per cent in 1991 and today it has come down to 10 per cent. Hindus have been coming out from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, primarily due to religious reasons. This has been accompanied by an equally large movement of Muslims for economic reasons. Initially there was some movement of Muslims from Eastern India into East Pakistan; but unlike the West, this movement was not very large. Many of these returned to India.

Movements of populations for economic reasons have also been taking place in other parts of the world, notably the USA. The three South-Western states of the USA, Texas, New Mexico and California, have been facing the problem of illegal migration from Mexico much like what we have of illegal migrants from Bangladesh. It is estimated that in the next census in the USA, the White population of California will come down to 49.8 per cent, with the non-Whites being mostly Hispanics from Mexico. Conditions in the USA are different because they have more land space, a much stronger economy and they have adopted stringent modern methods to check illegal migration. Moreover, there is little religious or security dimension to the influx of Mexican migration into the USA. Germany is another country facing the problem of large numbers of migrants. Initially after the Second World War, the Germans brought in large numbers of Turkish labour to reconstruct their war ravaged country. Many of these settled in Germany and more started immigrating for economic reasons. The Germans tightened immigration laws and sealed their borders against Turkish immigration. The large Turkish population in Germany has been allowed to stay but they have been declared stateless citizens. I have quoted the examples of the USA and Germany because they have relevance for us.

In so far as illegal migrants from Bangladesh into India are concerned, their numbers have become gigantic. Shri Indrajit Gupta, the then Home Minister stated in the Parliament on 6 May 1997, that there were one crore illegal Bangladeshi migrants in India. With continuing influx their numbers must have appreciably increased in the last three years. The bulk of these migrants have come into states bordering Bangladesh. However, a large number

has infiltrated into almost all parts of India including Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow and so on. They create economic and law and order problems but they are not a security threat, as in the North East. Assam is the one state which has faced maximum threat to its security in this region from this trans-regional movement of population. In other areas the security threat is almost insignificant except in Tripura, where it is of a different kind. In view of this, I propose to be Assam specific.

### **Illegal Migration into Assam**

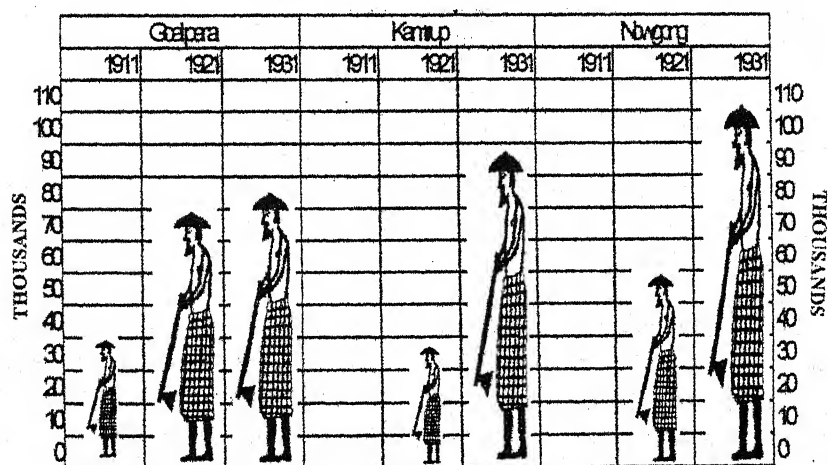
Assam is the mother state of the North-East. Even after its political fragmentation, it has more than double the population of the remaining six states. 71 per cent of our population in the North-East live in Assam, whose economic resources far outpace those of other states. It also has a long political history. When the British occupied Assam in 1826, it was made a part of Bengal Presidency. There was great resentment in Assam against Bengali domination and imposition of the Bengali language. In 1876, Assam became a separate province. I am going back into history only to underscore Assamese sentiments to retain their separate identity. We need to appreciate and understand this in the context of the emerging demographic scenario in Assam and its implications for India's security.

Communal politics in India started with the birth of the Muslim League at Dhaka in 1905. The British in pursuit of their 'Divide and Rule' policy, partitioned Bengal in 1905. Assam lost its separate identity and became a part of a Muslim-dominated East Bengal ruled from Dhaka by a Lieutenant Governor. Curzon's Partition of Bengal led to a nation-wide political movement. In Assam it was connected with the fear of losing Assamese identity and getting swamped by a much larger Bengali population. In 1911 the Partition of Bengal was annulled and Assam again became a separate province.

The British imported tea garden labour from other provinces as the Assamese were not willing to work as labourers. They also imported peasants from East Bengal, mostly Muslims, to work on virgin land in Lower Assam to meet the growing demand for food in the wake of the large movement of population. The peasant

population coming into Assam was largely from areas around Mymensingh in East Bengal and was called Mymensinghias. The 1931 census report graphically depicts the growth of Mymensinghias in Lower Assam, which then had only three districts of Goalpara, Kamrup and Nagaon. Between 1911 and 1931, the Muslim population in Assam increased from 5 per cent to 30 per cent. S C Mullan, the Director of Census in Assam in 1931, was a far-sighted British ICS officer. He analysed the impact of what he called, "the invasion of vast horde of land hungry Bengali immigrants, mostly Muslims from the districts of Eastern Bengal and in particular Mymensingh. By 1921 the first army corps had passed into Assam and had practically conquered the district of Goalpara...Where there is waste land thither flock the Mymensinghias...A population which must amount to over half a million has transplanted itself from Bengal to Assam Valley during the last twenty-five years...The only thing I can compare it to is the mass movement of a large body of ants...It is sad but by no means improbable that in another thirty years Sibsagar district will be the only part of Assam in which an Assamese will find himself at home." This was an amazing forecast made over 70 years ago. It has become the main cause of unrest in Assam in recent times.

Extract of Census Report of 1931



The growth of a large Muslim population in the province helped the Muslim League, with its brand of communal politics, to gain

ascendance in Assam. After the introduction of provincial autonomy, Assam alternated between a Muslim League and a Congress Government. The Muslim League Ministry of Sir Saddulla Khan encouraged immigration of East Bengal peasants by allocating land to them on the plea of 'Grow More Food'. Lord Wavell, the then Viceroy of India in his book, *A Viceroy's Journal*, wrote that what the Muslim League Ministry was trying to do in Assam was not 'Grow More Food' but 'Grow More Muslims'. In the 1940s the demand for Pakistan as a separate homeland for Muslims gained great currency. The Muslim League wanted Assam to be included in East Pakistan. The Cabinet Mission in 1946 proposed a Grouping Plan in which Hindu and Muslim majority provinces were to be in Groups A and B, respectively, but in the East, Assam and Bengal were to be in Group C. If grouping was to be on the basis of religion, it was not fair to group a Hindu majority Assam with a Muslim majority Bengal. The population of Assam then was only 69 lakhs as compared to Bengal's over 6 crores. This grouping would have led to the Assamese getting completely swamped by Bengalis. The Congress High Command comprising Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Maulana Azad, accepted the Grouping Plan which was very unfair for Assam. Jinnah was jubilant and at Guwahati he declared that Assam was now in his pocket. Gopinath Bordoloi, the leader of the Assam Congress, was quick to see the danger in grouping Assam with Bengal. The long cherished dream of the Muslim League of *Bange-Islam* comprising Bengal and Assam would become a reality with Assam as part of East Pakistan. Bordoloi rebelled against his party High Command and demanded rejection of the Grouping Plan. Mahatma Gandhi gave him support and the Grouping Plan got shelved. Even today Bordoloi's stand is gratefully remembered in Assam and he is rightly considered the saviour of Assam.

Failure to get Assam included in East Pakistan in 1947 did not mean that the Pakistanis had given up their ambition to acquire it. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in his book *Myth of Independence* wrote, "It would be wrong to think that Kashmir is the only dispute that divides India and Pakistan...One at least is nearly as important as the Kashmir dispute, that of Assam and some districts of India adjacent to East Pakistan. To these, Pakistan has very good

claims." Even a pro-India leader like Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wrote before the emergence of Bangladesh, in his book *Eastern Pakistan : Its Population and Economics*, "Because Eastern Pakistan must have sufficient land for its expansion and because Assam has abundant forests and mineral resources, coal, petroleum etc, Eastern Pakistan must include Assam to be financially and economically strong."

The unabated influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh has been continuing after Independence. By the end of the 1960s it had already assumed dangerous proportions. The then Governor of Assam Shri B K Nehru, a cousin of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, and Shri Bimala Prasad Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam, took up this matter with New Delhi for appropriate preventive action. They were asked to lie low. Referring to this Shri B K Nehru in his recently published Memoirs has written, "Efforts were made from time to time by the Government of Assam to evict these illegal immigrants but they were always frustrated by Delhi. One such time was made by Chaliha after consultation with me and with my full encouragement... The East Bengali Muslim was the main vote bank of the Congress party in Assam. Chaliha, dating as he did from the days of the freedom struggle, was governed by the values of that time. He placed national interest above those of the party. But the High Command thought otherwise, the party interests were paramount".

In 1978 Shri S L Shakhder told a conference of Chief Electoral Officers, "In one State (Assam) the population in 1971 recorded an increase as high as 34.98 percent over the 1961 figures and this increase was attributed to the influx of a very large number of persons from the neighbouring countries." He further stated, "A stage would be reached when the State would have to reckon with the foreign nationals who may probably constitute a sizeable percentage if not the majority of the population of the State. Another disturbing factor in this regard is the demand made by the political parties for the inclusion in the electoral rolls of the names of such migrants who are not Indian citizens, without even questioning and properly determining the citizenship status." A few months later a by-election was held at Mangaldoi in which there were complaints



of about 70,000 illegal migrants figuring in the voter's list. This sparked the anti-foreigner student movement in Assam. About the same time, ULFA (the United Liberation Front of Assam) insurgency also commenced in Assam. In 1983, elections in Assam were forced by the Government of India on the basis of defective voters list. This only added fuel to the students movement and to insurgency in the state.

In the wake of the Neille massacre of 1983, the Government of India enacted the highly controversial Illegal Migration (Determination by Tribunal) Act. I shall soon discuss the provisions of this act but for the present I shall continue with the history of illegal migration into Assam. In 1990, at seminars in Dhaka many intellectuals advocated the idea of *lebensraum* or living space for Bangladesh. Articles on this subject have appeared in *Holiday*, a magazine published from Dhaka. Mr Abdul Momin a former Foreign Secretary wrote, "The runaway population growth in Bangladesh resulting in suffocating density of population in a territorially small country presents a nightmarish picture... our bulging population might find a welcome in adjacent lands inhabited by kindred people." Sadeq Khan a former Ambassador wrote "By the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century Bangladesh will face a serious crisis of lebensraum...there is no reason why regional and international co-operation, could not be worked out to plan and execute population movements...The natural trend of population overflow from Bangladesh is towards the sparsely populated lands...of the North East in the Seven Sister Side of the Indian Sub-continent."

In 1992, when I happened to be in Calcutta, I met Lt Gen Jameel Mahmood who had served with me in the Army. He was then the Eastern Army Commander. He expressed his grave concern over the influx of illegal migrants in the North-East. He said that he had spoken to the Chief Minister of both West Bengal and Assam and had told them that if suitable steps were not taken to deal with this problem, the boundaries of India in this region may have to be redrawn. There is also documentary evidence of his views on this score. As per the minutes of a Civil Military Conference at Calcutta addressed by him on 12 February 1993, he stated that Bangladesh "continues to be plagued with galloping



population, economic poverty and natural calamities resulting into abnormal growth of population in the North East, particularly in Assam which needs to be checked."

There are varying views regarding the present strength of Bangladeshi illegal migrants in Assam. On 10 April 1992 Shri Hiteswar Saikia the then Chief Minister of Assam stated in the Assam Legislative Assembly that there were 3 million Bangladeshi illegal migrants in Assam, but only two days later presumably on account of political compulsions he issued a statement that there was not a single illegal migrant in Assam. Sheikh Haseena, the present Prime Minister of Bangladesh, is known for her friendly attitude towards India. Yet she recently stated that there were no illegal migrants from her country in India. There is of course a staggering difference between no illegal migrants and one crore illegal migrants as stated by Shri Indrajit Gupta in the Parliament. On 9 March 1993, Lt Gen Jameel Mahmood reported to Army Headquarters that the estimate of illegal migrants in Assam at that time was 30 lakhs. Over the last seven years this number should have increased considerably.

In November 1998 after an in-depth study of the problem, including extensive reconnaissance of Assam's land and riverine border, and after prolonged discussions with various people of diverse background, I submitted a detailed special report to the President of India on illegal migration into Assam. It was not possible for me to give any specific figure on the number of illegal migrants in Assam, as no census of their numbers had been carried out. However, there were several indicators which provided irrevocable proof of their very large numbers. Community-wise growth rate of Hindus and Muslims in Assam between 1971 and 1991 shows 41 per cent for Hindus as against 77 per cent for Muslims. This 36 per cent variation in the growth of the two communities in Assam is considerably higher than the 6.7 per cent variation in the rest of the country. Whereas the growth rate of Muslims in Assam has been 77 per cent, their growth rate in the rest of India is only 55 per cent. Only the huge influx of illegal migrants into Assam can explain this great variation. Recent enumeration by the Election Commission shows a 16.4 per cent growth rate in Assam between 1994 and

1997 as against the All India average of only 7 per cent. These telling statistics indicate the dimension of the problem. It is now assessed that 40 out of 126 constituencies in the Assam Legislative Assembly are dominated by Bangladeshi immigrants.

In my report to the President, I made 15 specific recommendations on how to deal with the problem of large-scale illegal migration into Assam. One of these was to repeal the IM(DT) Act and replace it with a legislation ensuring maximum protection and least harassment to our minority population. I even recommended that in view of the large numbers involved and the refusal of Bangladesh to accept any migrants deported by us, as also for humanitarian reasons, these illegal migrants should not be deported. However, at the same time, I stated that an impartial survey must be carried out quickly to identify the illegal migrants and declare them stateless citizens with no voting rights. This is what has been done in the case of Turk migrants in Germany. Similarly, one lakh non-Muslim refugees from West Pakistan in 1947, who moved into Jammu and Kashmir before they could be stopped, are to this day stateless citizens, with no voting rights. In the case of Bangladeshi illegal migrants, we have in Assam already given Indian citizenship to all those who came in upto 25 March 1971, a concession not available anywhere else in India. The question now is of the post-1971 illegal migrants.

I have traced the history of the movement of population from East Bengal, East Pakistan and now Bangladesh for over 100 years to promote a proper understanding of this complex problem and of the legitimate and standing fears of the Assamese people. The unabated influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh into Assam threatens their identity and has security implications of much greater dimension in Assam than in any other state of our country.

### **The Illegal Migration Act**

The Illegal Migration (Determination by Tribunal) Act referred to as IM(DT) Act has become a very controversial issue. There is a widespread view in Assam that this Act does not deter illegal migrants but shields them and encourages their unabated influx. This

Act is more a defence of illegal migrants by tribunal than their deportation. The contrary view is that this Act saves the minorities from harassment and its continuance is therefore necessary. The latter view appeals to the bulk of our minorities. Political parties for their own reasons have been expressing support for one or the other view. Let us first acquaint ourselves with the provisions and the working of this act.

We have a Foreigners Act in our country which was framed in 1946 and broadly conforms to the pattern in vogue in all countries of the world. It gives the Police powers to detain, arrest and search a person suspected to have illegally entered the country. If that individual claims to be an Indian citizen, he has to provide proof for his claim. On conviction, he has the right of one appeal to a higher court.

Whereas Foreigners Act applies to the entire country, its provisions stand suspended in Assam. A special legislation has been made for Assam in the form of the IM(DT) Act. The broad provisions of this Act are that two individuals living within a radius of three kilometres of a suspected illegal migrant, have to file a complaint and deposit Rs 25 to allow for the process of detection to commence. This three-kilometre stipulation has been modified to: the complainants have to be from within the area of the Police Station concerned and the amount to be deposited has been reduced to Rs 10. The Police can also *suo moto* initiate action but they do not have the authority to detain, arrest or search in such cases. It is for the complainants or the Police to establish that the individual concerned is an illegal migrant. In other words, while under the Foreigners Act the onus of proof is on the suspected individual, in the case of the IM(DT) Act the burden of proof shifts to the State. The latter has to prove that the individual is not an Indian citizen. An elaborate screening process has been prescribed and the individual concerned has the right of two appeals, first before a District Tribunal and thereafter before an Appellate Tribunal. The Act caters for 16 District Tribunals, each with two retired District Judges or Additional District Judges. The Appellate Tribunal consists of two retired High Court Judges. Supporting staff has been provided for the tribunals. In addition, a Border Police Force comprising some

4000 Policemen under an Additional Director-General of Police has been provided to assist the process of detecting illegal migrants.

The practical problems faced in the working of the IM(DT) Act are as follows :-

(a) Complainants have to be highly motivated to come forward to lodge complaints against any suspected illegal migrant. Since they have to be from the same general area as the individual complained against and that area is generally dominated by illegal migrants and their sympathisers, the security of the complainant gets endangered. The stipulation requiring payment of a monetary fee to make a complaint, acts as a further deterrent. Thus very few people come forward to make such complaints.

(b) The Police do not have the powers to detain, arrest or search a suspect. Thus when any individual is suspected to be an illegal migrant and the process of investigation commences, the suspected individual often melts away and is not traceable. Even if initially he does not disappear, he may do so at a later stage. The absconding trick can take place during the screening process, during trial by District Tribunal and during the 30 days period allowed for appeal before the Appellate Tribunal.

(c) Unlike other criminal cases, witnesses appearing before the tribunals are not paid any travel expense. This becomes yet another impediment in the detention of an illegal migrant.

The results achieved under the IM(DT) Act have been very disappointing. Despite the well known fact that millions of illegal migrants have come into Assam, in 15 years we have managed to identify only 9599 and of them only 1454 could be deported. Many of these deported migrants may well have come back through our highly porous borders. As a rough estimate, the Exchequer has spent some 300 crores in 15 years over the infrastructure for IM(DT) and hardly any worthwhile results have been achieved.

Before one takes a view about the IM(DT) Act, the following questions need to be pondered over :-

(a) An illegal migrant in Assam is governed by the IM(DT) Act but in other states by the Foreigners Act. Thus a Bangladeshi coming into Assam has to be dealt with under the IM(DT) Act, while in all other states including the other six states in the North-East and in neighbouring West Bengal under the Foreigners Act. Is there any country in the world where two sets of laws operate in different parts of the country for dealing with the identity of foreigners accused of illegal entry into the country?

(b) In all countries of the world, the onus of proof to establish citizenship lies with the individual concerned, as indeed it does all over India except in Assam. Is there any justification for shifting the onus of proof to the State in Assam?

(c) If the provisions of IM(DT) Act are considered vital for saving minorities from harassment, then should this Act not be extended to all other states in India? Should not those who want IM(DT) retained in Assam also press for it being extended to all other states? If because of large numbers involved, special provision has to be made in Assam, why should West Bengal be treated differently when it is supposed to have more illegal migrants than Assam?

(d) Can we afford a non-performing IM(DT) Act apparatus which has so far cost us roughly 300 crores with hardly any worthwhile results and is actually kind to the illegal migrant?

The present position regarding this Act is that the Government of Assam has recommended its repeal and the Government of India is examining the matter. In 1996, Shri H D Deve Gowda, as Prime Minister during his tour of the North-East, had declared that the IM(DT) Act would be repealed but he could not do so due to lack of required support in the Parliament. So far as political parties are concerned, the BJP and the AGP want this Act to be repealed but the Congress, some alliance partners of NDA and parties of

minorities, want this Act retained. A Public Interest Litigation from Bengal has challenged the validity of IM(DT) Act in the Supreme Court. Affidavits have been filed by the Government of India and all the state governments bordering Bangladesh. The Supreme Court has directed the Government of India to resolve this issue by January 2001. Given the political arithmetic in the Parliament, it may not be possible for the Government of India to find a legislative solution. The Supreme Court will then have to consider what should be done about the IM(DT) Act.

### **Implications For India's Security**

The massive influx of one crore illegal migrants from Bangladesh is a national problem with economic, administrative and political implications. In 1971 India found such a demographic burden unbearable and had to go to war with Pakistan. However, today a demographic aggression of similar dimensions is being borne by us. Its security implications, both internal and external, are very grave in Assam. The rest of the country does not face a security threat of the same magnitude.

The people of Assam have had a litany of legitimate grievances and a feeling that New Delhi had been neglecting Assam and even discriminating against it. This started from 1946 with the Congress High Command willing to sacrifice Assam by accepting the Grouping Plan. The Partition of the country played havoc with the geography of the North-East, denying it the entrepot of Chittagong and also denying it the use of the Brahmaputra as a waterway for trade and transportation. This became largely responsible for the decline in Assam's economy. The per capita income in Assam at the time of Independence was Rs 40 higher than the national average. It is now over Rs 3000 less than the national average. The need for hydel projects in Assam was much greater than in other states, where Bhakra Nangal, Mahanadi, Damodar Hydel Project and other such projects came up. Assam has more than one third of the water wealth of India and is prone to ravaging floods every year. Yet no major hydel project or public sector unit was put up in Assam. The merger of the Princely State of Coch Behar with Bengal rather than Assam was resented because geo-



graphically and ethnically it was closer to Assam. Whereas till very recently large states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar were not partitioned, a small state like Assam was politically fragmented several times leading to the emergence of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and even Arunachal Pradesh as separate states. The first oil refinery after Independence was set up at Baruani ignoring the agitation for locating it in Assam. The argument that this had to be done for security reasons was not convincing. If the oil wells and oil pipelines could be safe in Assam, so could the oil refinery be. In 1962 Jawaharlal Nehru's broadcast that his heart goes out to the people of Assam, was resented because it showed that nothing concrete was to be done for Assam in an hour of grave national crisis. Against this backdrop of grievances, the dimension of the illegal migration problem brought into focus in 1978 by the Chief Election Commissioner acted as the last straw leading to widespread insurgency in which several thousand people have lost their lives. This has also had a crippling effect on the economic growth of Assam.

Insurgency was at its peak in Assam when Prime Minister I K Gujral rang me up to say that Assam was burning. The Chief Secretary and Director General of Police of Assam had deserted a few months earlier. The Chief Minister had escaped an attack on his life by a hair-breath. An Inspector General of Police and a brigadier had been shot dead in Guwahati, while two colonels had been shot inside Kamakhya temple. There had been large-scale ethnic violence between Bodos and Adivasis in which several hundreds were killed. There were two lakh refugees, mostly Adivasis, living in Relief Camps. Railway trains like the Brahmaputra Mail and another passenger train had been blown up by explosions, causing the death of a large number of passengers. Road and rail culverts had also been blown up, disrupting land communications with the rest of the country. The militants enjoyed wide sympathy and support of the people. All in all, the situation was very grim.

We crafted a three-pronged strategy to deal with the situation. The first prong was intensified and co-ordinated operations under a Unified Command. The second prong consisted of psychological initiatives to win the hearts and minds of the people and draining



out their sympathy and support for the militants. The third prong was economic development. The three prongs closely interacted with each other. Success of military operations removed the terror among the people and their attitudinal change has helped Security Forces in obtaining high quality intelligence, which is the bedrock of success in counter-insurgency operations. Our Security Forces have inflicted heavy attrition on the militants. Despite the sanctuary enjoyed by them in Bhutan, we have been able to virtually break their backs. During the last three years over 700 militants have been killed in encounters, over two thousand weapons have been recovered, Rupees one crore in cash has also been recovered and nearly 2500 militants have surrendered. These figures speak for themselves.

Our psychological initiatives have not been crude propaganda. They have been organised in a subtle and co-ordinated manner. We effectively countered the separatist canard of the militants that Assam had never been a part of India till the arrival of the British. Civilisational, cultural and historical links of Assam starting from the Epic period to the common struggle for Independence were emphasised. We delved into the history of Assam to make the people of the state proud of themselves and the rest of India proud of Assam. The only state which defeated repeated invasions of the Delhi Sultans and Mughal Emperors was Assam. This did not mean that Assam did not remain a part of India. Assam retained its independence throughout the medieval period. Whereas the rest of India had adopted Persian as its official language, Assam continued to have Sanskrit as its official language. The teachings of Srimanta Sankardev, the patron saint of Assam in the 16th Century, were highlighted. He referred to Bharat Punyabhumi in his songs and poems. We had documentary films telecast on the lives of heroes of Assam like Srimanta Sankardev, Lachit Barphukan and Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi. A Lachit Barphukan Gold Medal has been instituted at the National Defence Academy at Pune to be awarded to the best cadet for officer-like qualities from the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. The Chief Minister of Assam and I are going to Pune next month to unveil the statue of Lachit Barphukan at the National Defence Academy. Lachit Barphukan has been projected as a national military hero in the mould of Rana Pratap and Shivaji.

The Government of India was persuaded to award a posthumous Bharat Ratna to Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi and his life-size statue is being installed in Parliament House.

Security Forces have been undertaking wide ranging and ingenious civic action. This has greatly helped in promoting a people friendly image of the Army. The very few instances of excesses or molestation of women, were dealt with promptly and the guilty awarded exemplary punishment. This has brought about a sea change in the attitude of the people of Assam towards militancy. The boycott calls given by militants on special occasions like Independence Day and Republic Day are now being totally ignored. They gave boycott calls during the last parliamentary elections and even threatened those who would go to exercise their franchise. We ensured that there was no instance of major violence in Assam on polling day and the people gave a fitting reply to the militants with a record turn out of 72 per cent. This was the highest in India. There have been several instances in which unarmed villagers have caught hold of armed militants. During the last few months 43 militants in different instances were caught by villagers and some 20 of them were lynched. Our planned psychological initiatives to win over the people got a boost on account of some follies of the militants. Their brutal killing of a highly popular and dedicated social worker like Sanjoy Ghosh evoked a sense of revulsion amongst the people. The call given by the militants to support the *mujahideen* during the Kargil War became very counter-productive for them. There was as much patriotic fervour during this war in Assam as in other parts of India, particularly when body bags of Assamese soldiers killed in Kargil started arriving in Assam. The militant leaders living in Bangladesh have maintained a thundering silence on the illegal migration issue which has been taken up by the state government. There have also been increasing instances in which militants have been resorting to harassing innocent civilians and the ideological content of their movement has acquired a criminal hue. All this has now greatly distanced the militants from the people of Assam.

On the development front, we have had a great success story with our one lakh Shallow Tubewell Scheme. This has led to Assam

having two crops a year. For the first time in 50 years, Assam is today no longer a deficit state in food. We held a seminar on the Green Revolution in Assam in July 2000, attended by the Finance Minister and Dr Swaminathan, the father of the Green Revolution in India. Dr Swaminathan stated that he had not come across another instance anywhere in which such rapid progress had been made towards ushering in a Green Revolution as in Assam.

The impact of our three-pronged strategy has brought about a sea change in the situation in Assam. I can say with confidence that Assam is now emerging out of a dark tunnel of violence and is advancing towards a bright sunshine of peace. However, we cannot afford to be complacent. The continued presence of militants in their sanctuaries in Bhutan and the continued influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh cannot be ignored. ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate [of Pakistan]) activity from bases in Bangladesh has markedly increased in Assam. The Assam Police has scored commendable success in apprehending some key ISI operatives and a number of people linked with them. However, I am concerned about what the Census of 2000-2001 will reveal of the demographic pattern in Assam. An abnormal increase in the number of illegal migrants from Bangladesh can create an explosive situation. We must go all out to stop or at least greatly eliminate the influx of illegal migrants into Assam.

There is also an equally grave threat to our external security from this movement of population. A look at the map of the North-East shows how Assam dominates the tenuous land link of the Siliguri Corridor with the rest of India from the East. This underscores its geo-strategic importance. It so happens that the illegal migrants have a maximum presence in the crucial districts of Assam like Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta and so on. I would again like to quote the late Lt Gen Jameel Mahmood. In March 1993, he recommended drastic measures against these illegal migrants. He stated "It is not far fetched to visualise a Kashmir like situation in another 5 to 10 years, wherein Bangladesh egged on by Pakistan may fight a proxy war and cause national security problems." In 1993 he could not have visualised the Talibanisation that has since taken place in Pakistan. No doubt, we have a friendly government led by

Sheikh Haseena at Dhaka, but the situation in this regard may change drastically if a government hostile to India comes to power there. Sheikh Haseena herself is on record saying that the military which has been in power in Bangladesh for 12 out of 29 years of its existence, may well try to seize power again. This will pose a grave external security threat not only to Assam but to the entire country. The entire North-East land mass can get cut off. Assam's turn over of 3000 crores a year in tea, 2500 crores in oil and other economic assets of the North-East, can be lost to the nation.

### **Conclusion**

The trans-regional movement of population into Assam must be viewed against the backdrop of the past 100 years of history, throughout which three trends have remained constant – the fear of the indigenous people of being swamped by immigrants, the desire of foreign elements to somehow acquire Assam and the efforts of some politicians to take advantage of the situation for their own purpose. After Independence this movement acquired a national security dimension. Today this is compounded by growing international Islamic fundamentalism and the desperate efforts of forces hostile to India to destabilise our country. Assam is now emerging out of a long period of violence but dangers still lurk to its internal and external security.

Intra-regional movement of population reflected by the massive influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh into Assam poses a very grave threat, both to our internal and external security. I am confident that we are quite capable of meeting this threat but we should not at any stage lose sight of the threat and should always be prepared to counter it. The threat is both to the identity of the Assamese people and to the land link of the North-East land mass to the rest of India. Any breach of this link will have disastrous consequences for the entire nation. We must at all times be fully vigilant. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

# The NCC or Compulsory National Service for Two Years

LT SUNIL D DOGRA

*We know how to find pearls in shells of oysters, gold in the mountains and coal in the bowels of the earth, but we are unaware of the spiritual germs, the creative nebulae that a child hides in himself when he enters this world.*

Dr Maria Montessori

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he National Cadet Corps (NCC) came into existence soon after independence and has been instrumental in making better citizens out of children ever since. In addition, it has provided a firm ground for the induction of youth into the Indian Armed Forces. The age at which a student joins the National Cadet Corps is such that he is in the formative years of his life. The values and sense of patriotism which he experiences at that stage, while going through the various activities associated with the NCC, go a long way in shaping his personality as an adult. Continuous training on the parade ground coupled with activities like small arms firing, sailing, adventure camps, annual camps, etc, go on to make an individual who not only possesses a sound body but a sound mind as well. These activities inculcate habits like sportsmanship, being conscious about physical fitness, discipline, comradeship and a sense of adventure. Mental toughness is perhaps the most important trait which a NCC cadet learns. It will not only help him to become a better officer in the Indian Armed Forces, but also help him in his everyday life.

The statistics indicate that although NCC is important for nation-building, the participation has been very low with only about four per cent of the total number of students able to get enrolled in

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NCC. This is indeed a very small percentage for a vast country like India, with a population touching the 100 crore mark. It is therefore necessary to find some other way to ensure larger participation from the youth of the country towards building India into a global power. It might not be possible to create an infrastructure within the NCC to accommodate approximately one and a half crore students; the existing facilities cater only for about 11 lakh students. Neither is it possible to make national service compulsory for such a large number, as it will not only create administrative problems but will also make a financial dent in the economy of the country. Therefore, the best option available for such a massive task will be to make both activities concurrent and optional, but compulsory for award of a degree. Such a task will not only require concrete policy but also strict implementation. At the first instance, awareness has to be created among the youth of the usefulness of such an exercise.

The existing enrolment in NCC is grossly inadequate. The first step required for implementation of such a policy at the national level will be to enhance the scope of the NCC. Gradually, the NCC should be able to accommodate about 50 lakh students, which will take care of about one-third of the students in the country. This will require almost five times growth of the NCC, but in the larger interest of nation-building this is inescapable. This growth has to be given a time-frame and may require a couple of years before it can be fully implemented. Expansion of the NCC will require a large contribution from the Indian Armed Forces in terms of providing manpower, facilities, transportation and guidance, just to mention a few. Whereas assistance from the Armed Forces can be made available, it will require contributions from a lot of other agencies to build up the infrastructure. The finance for the infrastructure will have to be made available by the Government of India and one option could be to include it in the five-year plans.

Growth and participation in the NCC is possible and can be achieved within a given period with continued determination and national will. The problem will be to cater for the remaining one crore students. Here, the National Service Scheme (NSS) comes into the picture. The NSS has been in existence for decades now,



but has not been as effective as the NCC. Before NSS is made compulsory for the remaining students, it will require to go through some organisational changes. NSS, in its present form, is volunteer-based and does not ensure strict and compulsory participation in nation-building. The various activities associated with NSS at present are not considered adequate to mould an individual into a responsible citizen. It will not be possible for the Armed Forces to manage the NSS as well, if that option is considered, as they already have their hands full. So, we will have to look elsewhere to take responsibility for better and effective management of this organisation.

The country has an effective and well-oiled educational machinery. This organisation, with its vast infrastructure, expertise and manpower, can play a vital role in the implementation of compulsory national service in educational institutions. At the college and university level, instructors should be made responsible for efficient organisation, implementation of policies, making training programmes and co-ordinating and organising daily activities of the NSS. The Government on its part will have to make some budgetary allocations for this purpose.

### **THE ROLE OF NCC AND NSS**

With the majority of the Indian population residing in rural areas, there are inherent problems associated with such a vast number of people being from rural backgrounds. For a country like India, it might be a very difficult task to eradicate such problems with Government policies. So, a much larger participation is required from among the people to tackle such problems. There have been shining examples of a few individuals all over the world and within this country, who have taken upon themselves the task of improving the living conditions of the rural poor. Such people are no extraordinary human beings, but simply motivated to make the difference. Such motivation will have to be developed amongst the youth of this country and, if it does not come automatically, the option of degrees being associated with compulsory national service can be exercised.



The illiteracy rate is high in the country. Poverty is a direct cause of illiteracy. The other problems being faced by rural people are : shortage of drinking water; lack of primary health facilities; not being aware of the democratic set-up of the country, etc. In addition, there is ill treatment meted out to women, superstitions, lack of awareness on environmental issues, protection of wildlife and so on. All such problems keep the rural people away from the national mainstream, thereby denying larger participation in building of a modern and vibrant India.

It is said that the roots of this country lie in rural areas, where 80 per cent of our population lives. These people form such a large percentage of the population that without their integration and participation in the mainstream nothing would be possible. This is where NCC, NSS, and other national service agencies have a role to play. This role is vital and will carry with it a vast responsibility to awaken rural people to the dawn of the Twenty First Century. Today we talk about satellites, nuclear explosions, cross-border terrorism, nuclear doctrine, national security, etc. However, how many people from these rural areas are actually aware of these? Unless these people are aware of such activities and realise their impact on everyday life, it is no use talking about national cause or national security. The viewpoint of these people has to be taken into account. And before that comes the process of forming a viewpoint. This viewpoint can be formed only after people are made aware of such policies and their implications.

The role of the NCC and national service groups will therefore have to be modified and clearly defined. At the outset, the first problem that should be tackled by such students is illiteracy. Prior to the award of the degree, each student who is a part of either NCC or national service groups should be sent on field visits to rural areas and given the task of adult literacy. After a group of students have been allocated a village, they should be made to liaise directly with the village head for guidance and assistance in performing their job. Such activities can be specified within the training curriculum to undertake such missions. Once the group has been sent to such areas and undertakes the job of adult education, the students can be given a group of 8 to 10 adults and

ensure that they are made aware of their surroundings.

The same group of students, in addition to adult education, can be entrusted with creating environmental awareness. These students should advise people of the benefits of tree plantation, hazards associated with deforestation and advise them on the importance of wildlife. Since the majority of the rural population uses firewood both for domestic use as well as to keep the houses warm in winter, cutting trees is a normal practice. This practice has taken alarming proportions in some areas where hundreds of trees have been cut either for the purpose of domestic use or for agriculture. This has created environmental problems in many areas, and even rainfall has been affected in some cases. Therefore, if the students advise people on such issues, it is quite possible that such practices would cease. In addition, some people in the rural areas, due to their political influence, indulge in large-scale stealing of forest wood. These students should be given authority or instructed to report such malpractices to the district authorities, so that people are discouraged from such activities.

The NCC and NSS students on such missions will have to act as role models for the rural people. Some areas, which are completely backward and have no contact whatsoever with the outside world, should also be targeted. There are a lot of age-old traditions, rituals, religious sacrifices and other such practices which are still prevalent in some parts of the country. The Government has banned these practices, but implementation leaves much to be desired. Only a fraction of such incidents are reported in the media and a majority goes unnoticed. Since most such incidents happen quietly, culprits move scot-free even after committing such crimes. The students can take on the job of teaching people of the uselessness of such practices.

### **SOCIAL EFFECTS**

India is a country with various religious groups, tribes, castes, subcastes and so on. The dialect changes after every few kilometres and the people of the country speak innumerable languages. To implement change in a country with such diversities

will be a herculean task. Implementation will have a direct effect on the student community and an indirect effect on the people staying in various parts of this country. The social effects anticipated are, therefore, going to be far too many and will require a careful study. After the policy has been implemented, the first and foremost requirement will be to build upon the attitude of the students to take on this responsibility. There will be reservations, especially when almost the entire student community will find a condition being put on the award of their degrees. Further, the absorption of such a policy by the masses is another issue. People belonging to different communities and religious groups might show resistance in co-operating with students, especially when their women will have to actively participate in such movements. This is where the right attitude of the students will be helpful, with participation from girls as well as boys and their frequent interaction with the villages bringing about an absorption of these students into these communities. Once the students establish a personal rapport with the people, from then on other issues can be addressed too. It can start with a discussion on the irritants that affect the daily life in the villages.

These issues should be sincerely addressed by the students and then reported to district authorities who, in turn, should make efforts to address these concerns. The students by then will be an accepted part of the community, and will subconsciously be accepted as leaders by virtue of their educational qualification, sharing the concern of the rural folk and making efforts to bring in changes. The next logical step would be to involve people into improving overall development of the village. Of course, the Government will have to allocate some funds for such a task, which involves providing basic infrastructure for adult education, improving/providing the sanitary system, providing boarding and lodging for the students, etc. The villagers can also be educated to look for alternate sources of income like poultry, fishing, dairy farming, etc, which will improve the standard of living in these villages. The modern techniques used in planting trees and commercial benefits that the fruits growing on the trees bring should also be discussed with the people so that their horizons widen and they are able to appreciate various self-employment techniques.

The students in this case will be instrumental and this can be kept as a subject where they should be given a grading depending upon the type of work that a particular student has been able to do. This grading should provide a weightage for employment opportunity, which will automatically act as a motivator for the students.

The students under the national service scheme and NCC will be motivated to do well in such projects, since their performance here is going to be related to employment opportunities. In addition, it will broaden their own horizons by throwing their young minds open to the various cultures, traditions and rituals of the various parts of the country. It will further integrate them into the national mainstream and make them appreciate the life of rural people. Those students who go on to occupy posts where decision making is involved will be able to make better policies, having had firsthand experience of rural India.

### THE ECONOMIC EFFECT

For implementing a new policy and ensuring its success, there is no doubt that finances will have to be made available. Once the finances are available, their proper utilisation and accounting will be a massive task. A central organisation will have to be created to ensure that money allocated is not misused as is prevalent in existing Government schemes. Proper checks at each stage will have to be ensured to co-ordinate and see that money is uniformly distributed. The underdeveloped rural areas will have to be identified. Special attention will be required for such areas because people will take time to get to know of the existence of such a scheme. One possible solution could be grading the rural areas in broad categories, depending upon the level of development and existing infrastructure.

Funds can be allocated depending on the category under which a particular area falls. The district authorities and further subdivisional authorities right upto the village head can be made responsible for their respective areas. These funds should be available and then an organisation for auditing these funds needs to be created, wherein the participating students and a few selected

people from that area should be made available when such an audit takes place. The auditors on their part should interact openly with the students and the people and ask their suggestions and comments on issues like whether allocated funds are sufficient, the funds are being properly utilised, etc. This feedback should be directly forwarded to the control committee who, in turn, can initiate remedial measures and disciplinary action if any misapplication of funds is noticed by the auditors. A proper sanctity will have to be created at each stage to make such a policy successful. Many existing schemes for development of rural areas can be merged with this scheme and, with only few additional funds available, the process can kick-start.

### CONCLUSION

A timely pat is more effective than a bigger reward given later. This is true for the student community as well. To make this dream into a reality and to ensure effective implementation of this policy, the student will have to be treated as the key factor. The students will require help, encouragement and support from one and all to go ahead and do their jobs. At the same time, they will require moral support from the educated community and urban people who can come forward and contribute towards nation-building. Monetary benefits and performance-related jobs should be instituted to motivate the students to do better.

The National Cadet Corps and the National Service Scheme should provide such attractive opportunities to students that they willingly become a part of the organisation and participate wholeheartedly for its success. The enthusiasm seen in young boys and girls in the NCC is obvious and pride in the uniform reflects on their young faces. The same enthusiasm, pride and patriotism needs to be sustained and enhanced as these children shape into adults. These feelings can be channelised into the larger cause of nation-building. The National Service Scheme requires a little more attention in its present form, but can be reformed to play an active role. The organisation for both the NCC and the NSS exists; only the scope needs to be enhanced and accountability ensured at each step. It is possible that by increasing the strength of the NCC, we will be

directly helping the Armed Forces who are facing an acute shortage of manpower. There will be an option to select officers and men from a much larger group.

*The adult is the touchstone of good and evil.*

*He is infallible.*

*He is the good on which the child must model himself.*

**Dr Maria Montessori**

Both the children enrolled in the NCC and the youth in the NSS have a significant role to play. They will be expected to act like children yearning to learn and youth striving for excellence. Despite the problems associated with the implementation of such a policy, it will be a worthwhile effort to go ahead with it. Notwithstanding the socio-economic effects, national integration itself will get a big boost. It is high time that we wake up to the reality of the Twenty First Century and enter the new millennium on a confident note. People of this country and especially the youth will have to come forward and participate wholeheartedly in making this policy a success. Countries have risen from ashes to glory just on the strength of their youth.

#### **USI TIE**

USI ties are available in blue and maroon colours. Cost Rs. 275/- by post or Rs. 250/- by personal collection. Members interested may forward order with money, giving membership number, address and choice of colour. Delhi local cheques or demand drafts in the name of Director USI of India.



## Military Media Relations

MAJ MAROOF RAZA (RETD)

The 1990s will be remembered as the 'decade of the dish' (after that ubiquitous concave satellite dish that uplinks major events and gives the viewers a grandstand view of the latest happenings world-wide). It has brought the horrors of the battlefield to our living rooms. It also forces the hand of the policy makers, getting them to respond under the pressure of television. But Governments that pride themselves on their ability to control events and their steadiness will, of course, be reluctant to admit that the electronic interloper, television, plays any part in their decision making.

There was a time when soldiers would regard the media as an undisciplined, unkempt and unpatriotic lot, and view them with a combination of suspicion and astonishment. Journalism was then regarded as a cover for espionage! But this view is now held by only the orthodox few. Most good journalists – at the national level – see their job as part of their moral commitment to society, and with the odd exception, are upright people. And while they – unlike the Army – do not have a written code of ethics, they see their role as follows :-

- (a) To create public opinion.
- (b) Act as a watch-dog for citizens, especially on human rights issues.
- (c) Keep the public informed with balanced coverage of events.
- (d) Maintain national morale by giving responsible news reports.

Soldiers and journalists are not the most like-minded people, though they are not very different either. Their relationship, though, can often be unusual and complex. The media craves for the unusual; since bad news is good news, wars will always make

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headline news. There is, however, a need for the military and the media to understand each other and, more importantly, develop respect for each other. While the military is insulated and secretive, the media is proud to be open and can hardly ever keep a secret.

Across the world, military institutions have embarked on a new relationship with the media, since the media moulds national and international opinion and is a potent force-multiplier. In this century, they will need each other more than ever before. And this doesn't apply to the electronic media alone but to the print media as well. In fact, it is said that in the 21st Century the most important military assignments are likely to go to those with an eye for public relations and military intelligence and not to those from the combat arms as has been the case until now.

Though there are early warnings in case of civil wars, where brinkmanship often precedes the fighting, wars could come without a warning – as it happened in the Kargil conflict – and journalists will be tempted to rush blindly into a war zone, to get there first for a good story but not necessarily an accurate report.

Both the Gulf war (when satellite television brought the conflict in 'real-time' to its viewers), and in the Indian context the Kargil conflict (India's first televised war), have highlighted that journalists 'reporting' on a conflict cannot make up for their ignorance with enthusiasm only. They require considerable understanding of the mysterious ways of the Military and, therefore, the need for the media to be better informed about military affairs. Equally, the Armed Forces must now be trained and prepared to facilitate the tasks of the media, and also to counter disinformation. The Military would do well to note that 'information' is power in this age.

During the Kargil conflict, the inability of India's Ministry of Defence Public Relations outfit to handle the media led the Army Headquarters to set up an Information and Public Relations Cell. This enabled the Army to monitor and disseminate information in a calibrated manner, through the conflict. In a recent debate on the subject of 'Military-Media Relations' at the United Service Institution of India in New Delhi, some of the issues that emerged in the

discussions between a few media men and a larger group of Service officers are as follows :-

- (a) National interest is not necessarily a monopoly of the Establishment, and National Security and the interests of the Establishment are not always the same thing.
- (b) The Media often operates at two levels in conflict situations:
  - (i) A field team that is often respectful towards officers and commanders.
  - (ii) News Agencies which can be quite critical, and often dismissive, of the Government.
- (c) While the target audiences for the Media in a war could be the international community to justify the war, in counter-insurgency operations it is the local population.
- (d) Military Commanders should not only concentrate on operational issues, but also on Public and Media Relations. In short, Information must be made a Principle of War.

War reporting is not only a chronicling process, but also a learning process. It is therefore essential in a war, or even in a proxy war situation, for Military Headquarters at all levels to be equipped with 'press kits' and appropriate backgrounders for journalists – with maps, information on terrain, enemy deployments and the broad aspects of strategy which can be revealed without compromising surprise or security, since journalists are not good at keeping secrets.

So, while denying the Media information or waiting too long to structure a correct response might seem a safe thing to do from the Establishment's point of view, experience has shown that governments spend more time making up for the damage caused due to bad press later on. The Military and the Establishment must understand that speed is of essence to the electronic media. Since the source of sustenance is its audience, it has to operate by the rules of the market in this 'Consumer Era'. Therefore, if it doesn't

get the news it is looking for, media agencies will go to anyone to get their news reports, and can end up even glorifying a terrorist – as they did in the case of Mast Gul, the man responsible for burning down the Charar-e-Sharif shrine in 1995 in Kashmir!

Therefore, what is needed is Military-Media co-operation, and not necessarily a 'management' of the media. Government agencies and the Armed Forces must accept that :-

(a) There is no such thing as niche information, and restricting information to a handful of people serves little purpose; instead, military formations must broaden their hierarchy for dissemination. Keeping secrets is not so easy anymore as even friendly agencies do often leak out information, since what might be a sensitive issue for the Army in a counter-insurgency operation might not be so for the police.

(b) Today's modern communication is instant and reliable, and bad news to senior commanders could come faster through television or radio rather than from intelligence agencies (It takes just a phone call to reach a newsroom anywhere in the world).

There are, however, certain impediments in Military-Media Relations. First, the Government/Military Establishment has yet to fully appreciate the power of information and the role of the media in policy making. Two, the media does not respect the societal borders and taboos of the past. It is inspired by its own goals, and will go to any length to get news to the people – the consumers of information – who deeply resent any government control over the media. Therefore, the media must not be controlled, and holding back information and the banning of media from sensitive areas only leads to bizarre reporting, as the media must report something! The Establishment has yet to recognise the importance that terrorists place on news. For example, almost all militant outfits (tanzeems) in Jammu and Kashmir have a Public Relations team.

The media, they say, is "the terrorist's best friend... and as terrorism is aimed at those watching television – since TV declares

who is important – terrorists feel that the road to identity is to do something violent..." Therefore, in insurgencies, by using the media selectively, the terrorists are able to not only instil fear and insecurity amongst the people, but also create doubts in the minds of the Security Forces about the efficacy of their counter-insurgency operations, in turn, making the people and the Military lose faith in the government. This must be guarded against.

So winning the media over is half the battle, and a 'bonding' with the press is very important. For this the Military must follow two simple rules. First, it must respond or confirm a report if it is correct and deny it if it is wrong. It also helps to spell out the follow-up action that is at hand, such as an operation currently underway or disciplinary action being taken against soldiers in case of misdeeds. But soldiers must stick to the facts (however unpleasant these may be) and leave the analysis to the media. This will only increase their credibility.

Also, helping the uninformed reporters in the correct identification of military equipment is necessary, as incorrect references by reporters to equipment in a news report can have serious implications. For example, reports that tanks and not Armoured Personnel Carriers are being used in Counter-insurgency Operations could create alarm the world over. Secondly, 'media-savvy' Public Relations Officers down to a unit/sub-unit level must be appointed, since the battlefield of tomorrow will be that of low-intensity conflicts and of limited wars, where higher formation headquarters will often be too far away to respond quickly to the demands of the media.

A key issue that senior military officers in most armies are yet to come to terms with is that while the widest reach is that of the electronic media, it is paradoxically also the most superficial in its content. So a long drawn out interview is often a waste of time with television journalists, who will often carry only a sound byte or two. News on television is about the understated narrative, the accumulation of facts and images, that make the case more strongly than any argument. And, in television, a subject makes news for about 6 hours; after 12 hours it is often history. Also television crews

often prefer to show younger and more energetic commanders on the ground, who look good and sound good. While the print media prefers to meet senior officers for detailed interviews which are quoted verbatim. Both have their own importance. The shelf life (and reference value) of printed matter is much higher than that of a television report; and it thus requires equal attention.

It is important to understand that for the media "bad news is good news and good news is no news". Whether it is Kosovo, Kargil or Kandahar, it is the media's job to report the news and it is what they will continue to do. And this could happen with greater frequency than ever before, with round the clock news channels mushrooming everywhere. But these often lack in quality reporting, since more could mean worse. And so journalists in the field will be under pressure from their news editors to give 'consumer-oriented news' with pre-conceived notions. But good journalists are always objective. The fourth estate or the media is on nobody's side; the more professionally they are dealt with, the more positive is their response.

While analysis can be left to the columnists, a reporter attempts to show the situation on the ground – who is doing what to whom, and with what effects and why. As the media has its eyes and ears to the ground, it can be said that when there is a policy vacuum, when governments are without a course to follow or an expedient to clutch at, then newspaper or television images have a jolting effect, goading the leadership to move on. Therefore, in the news business, it isn't indifference but involvement that makes all the difference. And as commitment is to a soldier, good journalism is the 'journalism of attachment'.

# Combat Search and Rescue Operations

AIR MSHL BHARAT KUMAR, PVSM, AVSM (RETD)  
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## Introduction

A pilot knows that if he is shot down, or has to abandon his aircraft over enemy territory, it is his duty to avoid being captured and make every effort to return to his squadron. He must also be confident that his commanders and colleagues will do everything they can to rescue him. The time-frame between the time he ejects and his possible capture is a variable factor that depends on how close to, or far away, he is from the enemy or from a hostile populace. This pre-supposes that he is not injured and has the will to get back, knowing that if found by an irate civilian mob he could be subjected to indignities, torture and possible death if not made a Prisoner of War (POW).

A question that was often asked during the Kargil conflict was whether or not Flt Lt Nachiketa could have been rescued before he was captured. Yes, perhaps he could have been, provided the Indian Air Force (IAF) had in place an operational rescue machinery. In the wars fought since Independence, there have been no instances when downed aircrew have been rescued after being shot down over enemy territory. Though the Doctrine for the IAF makes peripheral reference to 'Search and Rescue', no attempt has been made to qualify what exactly is involved in terms of training and the wherewithal required to conduct a combat search and rescue (CSAR) mission. Thus the IAF is neither trained nor prepared to undertake such missions. Yet, during peace time, there have been numerous instances where Air Force, Army and Navy pilots have carried out daring rescue operations in the high Himalayas; from

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the top of towering structures; from a cable-car suspended precariously over a deep gorge; and from swirling flood waters and turbulent high seas. In nearly all cases those rescued have been hapless, stranded civilians or mountaineers who were ill or injured.

### **The Necessity of CSAR**

In future war-like operations, or even in the on-going proxy war, the possibility of an aircraft being shot down, or a pilot having to abandon his aircraft over hostile or enemy positions, cannot be discounted. The probability of such an occurrence is all the more in the present situation where sophisticated air-defence weapons are available in the hands of regular armed forces personnel, and even with State-sponsored terrorist forces. It is the duty of every aircrew to avoid capture, if the circumstances permit. However, it is equally the duty of a commander, and aircrew's colleagues, to do all they can to find and rescue him before he falls into enemy hands. Armed Forces personnel fight for a cause and have a common bond. Thus whether it is a sailor 'over board', or a wounded jawan fighting with his section, he will not be abandoned by his colleagues, often at the risk of their own lives.

Here a caveat must however be injected, and that is whether such missions or actions should be undertaken at the cost of other on-going operations. In such cases, the Commander will have to weigh the relative priority and the probability of success of such a mission. There is a special emphasis that this paper will give to aircrew, not only because they are precious to us, but also because they are irreplaceable. And there is a special 'tie that binds' a member of a squadron formation that has taken off on a mission together, to ensure that everyone returns. The safety and security of that fighting unit is dependent on vigil and professional competence of each member. Since there is so much inter-dependence between the pilots, is it any wonder that the aircrew fraternity has an especially close bond? This is a universal fact of life and CSAR has been carried out in virtually every foreign air force; so, why not in the IAF.

The morale of aircrew will 'sky-rocket' when each crew member knows that every effort will be made to save him were he to abandon the aircraft, in peace or in war. He would therefore



volunteer for every mission no matter what the odds, no matter how deep within enemy territory he has to penetrate or how dense the defences are over his target. A successful rescue mission would be the stuff heroes are made of, and the crew involved in bringing back the pilot would become household names, legends themselves, particularly if the rescue were fraught with danger.

An intrinsic reason for ensuring that our crews return to 'fight another day' is the high cost of training a pilot. It takes nearly five years to prepare a pilot to be professionally mission capable. This means he must undertake missions with the confidence of delivering his weapons accurately and engaging successfully in air combat. Today, the cost of training a fighter pilot is exorbitant, and at conservative estimates would amount to nearly Rs 20 crores. For high performance aircraft such as the Mirage and the Su 30, the costs would be more. There are other reasons too for carrying out rescue missions. One of them is the fact that because of his role and the flexibility of the air weapons, a pilot has a broader perspective of the overall battle picture when compared with his Army or Navy colleagues. His rescue deprives the enemy of vital intelligence, pertaining not only to the 'order of battle' of the Air Force, but more importantly that of the Army. Then, as happened in Nachiketta's case when he appeared on Pakistan TV, and before that in the Gulf War, captured pilots are used as propaganda material to influence public opinion. Their rescue deprives the enemy of this leverage.

### **CSAR Operations**

There are no known cases of CSAR missions having been carried out before the Second World War. Initially such missions were flown during the Battle of Britain by the *Luftwaffe*. Their Heinkel-B2 seaplanes painted with the universally acknowledged Red Cross and escorted by orbiting Me 110's would land in the Channel to recover downed aircrew, both German and Allied. The Royal Air Force (RAF) and the Royal Navy (RN) followed similar tactics and raised seven Air Sea Squadrons for duties around the British Isles, with five more operating in the Middle East. Of these, No 277 Squadron is credited with rescuing 1,000 personnel of whom 598 were aircrew. With the progress of the war, there were major improvements in rescue capabilities, and air-to-sea radar was

particularly effective in identifying small objects such as dinghies even in rough seas. The advent of the helicopter during the latter half of the war made a significant impact on the world of aviation, and more especially in rescue and airborne assault missions. During the Burma Campaign in 1944, Lt Carter Harmon carried out the first documented rescue mission in a YR-4 Sikorsky helicopter. Since then history is replete with stirring rescues carried out in these machines.

The US established the Air Rescue Service in March 1946. Initially, it was to provide cover around the continental US, but in 1949 its responsibility was extended to cover all air transport routes and areas where UN and US troops were deployed. During the Korean War 9898 personnel were rescued, of whom 996 were in combat situations. At that time, fixed-wing aircraft such as HU-16 Albatross and Boeing SB-17, a modified version of B-17 Flying Fortress, were used. In India, the B-24 Liberator was used in the air-sea rescue role though no combat rescues were carried out. Today, fixed-wing aircraft operate in a support role while the helicopter is the main rescue aircraft.

It was during the Vietnam War that CSAR really came into its own. Of the 4,120 lives saved by the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Services, 2,780 were combat-related. The best known helicopters of the time were the HH-3 "Jolly Green Giant" and the HH-53, "Super Jolly Green Giant". Typical force employment for a rescue mission involved a pair of helicopters escorted by fighter aircraft, and an airborne fighter air controller (FAC) all under the control of an airborne, orbiting command post. It was soon realised that fast jets were not the ideal aircraft to provide cover to the slow, lumbering helicopters. Consequently, the slower, heavily armed A-1 Skyraider replaced them. A normal mission comprised of two helicopters and eight Skyraiders. As a rule, two Skyraiders remained on 'ground alert' while the others got airborne. A single helicopter escorted by two fixed wing aircraft would proceed for the Search and Rescue mission, while the others remained as airborne 'standby' not too far away from the expected rescue area. The other supporting elements included the FAC in O-1/O-2/OV-10 aircraft, an air-to-air refuelling tanker and the airborne command post.

Before the actual recovery attempt was initiated, an authentication procedure was evolved to ensure that the downed airman was still free and that his security was not compromised, thereby jeopardising the entire mission. Another innovation that was successfully used was the use of helicopter gunships for sanitising the area and for fire-suppression. A new concept that was also tried out successfully was the aerial recovery of personnel by the Fulton Stars (Skyhook) system fitted on the Lockheed C-130-1. The system provided a line that was attached to the man on the ground and connected to a helium gas-filled balloon that would lift it (the line) aloft for interception by the specially adapted Hercules for a mid-air 'snatch'. Para-rescue was another effective method that helped save lives when a paramedic would descend to secure an injured aircrew to the winch who was then hoisted into the aircraft. Perhaps the most widely used method of finding, identifying and helping in the recovery was fine-tuning the capability of the airborne FAC. The FAC is an indispensable and integral part of all close support operations, and now more or less mandatory for all CSAR missions.

CSAR is not only about the rescue of aircrew. It also involves the recovery of large groups of persons, be they Special Forces who have been dropped behind enemy lines, or prisoners of war, or hostages. The first such attempt was made in Vietnam on 20 May 1970 when the Americans tried to rescue 75 prisoners, mostly aircrew, from Son Tay prison. As many as 116 aircraft were involved from seven air bases and three aircraft carriers. Personnel from all four US armed services participated in one way or another. The core force comprised 56 (Special Force) Green Berets, five HH-53 helicopters, one HH-3, two MC-130 (Skyhook modified Hercules) and five A-1E. The operation was mounted with clockwork precision, but failed because Intelligence had not learned that the POWs had been moved to another location a few days earlier. Then in April 1980, the US Government attempted to rescue hostages held by the Iranian Government. Operation Eagle Claw was mounted with 132 personnel from Delta Force, six RH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters, three MC-130 Hercules and three EC-130 tankers. The mission ended in disaster because of many reasons, some of which were : bad weather, poor maintenance of the RH-53 helicopters,

lack of IFR capability (ability to operate in adverse weather); inadequacy of reserve aircraft; poor communications and too much reliance on the 'good luck' factor. Further, command and control was exercised from the White House directly. There was, it is believed, at least one more plan to rescue the hostages (Operation Credible Sport) that was shelved because a specially modified C-130 Y crashed during the preparatory stage. This aircraft was fitted with powerful take-off and retro-rockets to give it near vertical take-off and landing capability.

It was accepted that CSAR was a specialised task, in war or during peacetime, to be carried out by specially trained and equipped forces. Accordingly, the United States Air Force (USAF) established a Search and Rescue Task Force (SARTF) whose size and composition would be determined by mission requirements. Typically it comprises four A-10s, a rescue combat patrol, HC-130 N tankers, Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), airborne FAC, AC-130 gunships, para-rescue personnel and recovery vehicles like Black Hawk or HH-53 helicopters. It could, on the other hand, comprise just one helicopter. Whether the slow A-10 was preferable in the face of a determined enemy to the more agile F-15/F-16 is a moot point. Organisationally all CSAR effort is controlled by the USAF Rescue Coordination Centre that worked well during the Gulf War and in the operations in Bosnia. In the latter case the successful rescue of Capt O'Grady who evaded the enemy for six days is indicative of the effort required and the planning and execution of a typical CSAR mission.

The US has not been alone in pioneering CSAR, or honing it to a fine art. The fact is that the US involvement in one conflict after another since the Second World War has made it imperative for them to lead developmental work in this sphere of activity. Several NATO countries have employed the US pattern of operations in CSAR. Though not much is known of erstwhile Soviet philosophy and methods, one thing is certain, and that is they were forced to innovate and engage in such missions during the war in Afghanistan. Tales of atrocities perpetrated on downed Russian aircrew spurred them into action and Mi-35 gunships were pressed into use for recovering such personnel.

## Hardware Requirements

Force composition and tactics to rescue downed aircrew will depend on the ground situation. However, there are some items of hardware that are considered essential, and are described in the following paragraphs.

**Personal Locator Beacon (PLB).** The location of the downed aircrew is the basic information required for planning and execution of the rescue mission, without which no attempt can even be contemplated. In rare cases other members of the formation would have seen exactly where the pilot landed after ejecting; however, he would not stay in the same location because the enemy too would know of his whereabouts. Further, the formation cannot possibly continue to orbit the area because of their limited airborne endurance, or even tactical considerations. The peacetime practice of 'sweeping' the area cannot be employed. Hitherto, PLBs transmitted on the international distress frequencies of 121.5 MHz or 243 MHz enabling specially equipped search aircraft to 'home' on to the signal. The disadvantage of this was that the enemy too could lock on to the signals and capture the pilot. The newer PLB now has digital personalised locator system PLS/TACBE that can be pre-programmed with individual codes. The more advanced versions permit automatic interrogation by CSAR/AWACS aircraft that can verify the authenticity of the transmission. The trend now is to have locator with the integral GPS facility that helps determine the pinpoint location of the individual.

**Voice Communication.** Communication with the downed aviator is highly desirable, but not mandatory for success of a mission. The advantages are many in that the survivor can state his physical condition, what the prevailing ground situation is like with reference to proximity of the enemy, and also a description of the terrain. State of the art equipment now provides for secure and 'burst transmission' with frequency hopping to reduce the risk of interception by the enemy.

**Rescue Equipment.** In case the aircrew is injured it may not be possible to rescue him without landing; alternatively, he would have to be 'winched' into the rescue aircraft. If incapacitated, he would have to be assisted by a paramedic or another crewman who would have to descend to his location. The winch capacity must cater for

lifting at least 200 kgs. In the IAF the helicopters currently in use have a maximum lift capability of 100 kgs only. This is a serious limitation as it increases the vulnerability of the aircraft by its having to spend more time in the rescue mission. Then, the paramedic/rescue crew would be apprehensive about his own safety if for some reason the helicopter is forced to exit the area leaving him to his fate. Finally, there is the problem of high engine temperatures that are caused when a helicopter is hovering for extended periods. There are a number of devices that can be used for rescue. Some of these are as under :-

(1) **Rescue Sling.** This is the most commonly used device with which a person is winched into an aircraft. It is particularly useful if the individual is in water or in an area where the helicopter cannot land. If in water, the person being rescued must know how to use the sling because of rotor downwash and the sea/river current. If the person is injured a diver to aid him may be required. If the winch or the sling has a weight limitation it leads to further problems. A sling is known as 'horse collar'.

(2) **Rescue Basket.** This is used primarily over the sea; especially if the individual has been incapacitated and there is no crew member to assist. A metal-framed basket is lowered into water and trolled towards the person. It cannot be manoeuvred, and tends to drift away as one swims towards it. Rotor downwash also adds to the problem. Further, there is also the possibility of injury because of the metal frame. More than one person can be rescued simultaneously provided the winch has the lifting capacity.

(3) **Forest Penetrator.** By virtue of weight it is able to penetrate forest canopy. It has three folded seats and slings and can also be used with a flotation collar over water. It was extensively used in Vietnam.

(4) **Stokes Litter.** A stretcher that is difficult to manoeuvre especially if it is to be brought into the confines of a helicopter cabin.

**Role Specific Rescue Aircraft.** Thus far, Utility and, in some cases, Attack Helicopters have been used for CSAR. The requirement is



for a specialist machine that is all-weather, has adequate range and endurance, capable of low-level operations at night, has an ECM (Electronic Counter Measures) suite and can be air-refuelled. If it is capable of self-defence in addition to bringing fire on the enemy on the ground, then it is an additional advantage. All this put together is a 'wish list' because of the costs involved, but it would be desirable if some of the capabilities are inherent in the rescue aircraft. If a fixed-wing aircraft is being used it must have V/STOL (Vertical/Short Take-off and Landing) capability similar to what the Bell Boeing V-22 Osprey has.

### **Software Requirements**

For CSAR to be successful there is need for proper and continuous training of the aircrew. Selected crew must maintain 'rescue capable status' in all helicopter units, irrespective of the Service. Flight Engineers and Gunners on board Air Force helicopters must be qualified to enter the water if the situation demands. In all combat-related missions, time is of essence. The chances of a successful rescue recedes as time passes. In similar vein, it is important that combat aircrew are also trained in water and jungle survival techniques. They must be familiar with the equipment that is used, and be capable of guiding rescue aircraft. Smart downed aircrew are a key element in a successful CSAR mission. Capt O'Grady's rescue in Bosnia is good example where the pilot greatly contributed to his survival and eventual return.

Time works against the rescuers. The enemy knows that a rescue operation will be mounted and will do all it can to defeat such efforts by shooting down the rescue aircraft. If they are monitoring the radio network they will be aware that such a mission is underway and would use decoys, subterfuge and other means to lure the aircraft within range of their air defence weapons. Or, they may wait for the helicopter to land or hover before opening fire. To prevent this secure communication system is indispensable. A fail-safe authentication procedure must be implemented and practised so that the rescue team knows that the mission has not been compromised, or that the aircrew on the ground has not been forced into transmitting.

Every CSAR mission is fraught with grave and inherent risks. There could be casualties even among the rescue team. However,



the message that must be drilled into everyone's mind is that the downed aircrew is 'one of our own'. It is, therefore, the moral responsibility of all concerned to get him out of his predicament. The rescue team must have the confidence that when they are going down to help get the 'downed' person out they will not be left on their own. The great efforts made during the Gulf War to bring back aircrew who had ejected from their aircraft is worthy of emulation.

### **Force Levels and Tactics**

The force levels and tactics for CSAR missions will be determined by a number of factors. If the enemy air force is active then there must be sufficient airborne escort to keep the enemy at bay, and if there are air defences they will have to be dealt with so that they do not interfere with the mission. Similarly, the presence of enemy troops in the vicinity will require them to be suppressed long enough to carry out the rescue. In all cases, a suitable helicopter with motivated and dedicated crew will be, and can be, the only means of extricating the downed crewman. The 'bottom line' will always be the affordability of resources. However, one factor that should be in abundance is the will to succeed, the initiative of the rescuing crews and the determination of the downed airman to evade capture and to get back home.

### **The Indian Air Force and CSAR**

The IAF has a fine record of peacetime rescues from various situations. In one case an oil rig was on fire and foreign civil helicopters with more versatile and better-equipped aircraft declined to undertake the mission. The IAF stepped into the breach and rescued those on the rig in a daring night operation. Despite such examples it is not clear as to why the Service has had no tradition of CSAR. The Jungle and Snow Survival School does teach aircrew escape and evasion methods, but there is no follow-up, and more often than not the lessons learned are soon forgotten.

This lacuna in our training ethos must change. The IAF has the resources and dedicated crew; it is the mind-set at the senior officer level that must accept the necessity of such missions, expensive as they are, or can be. A successful rescue mission will work wonders for the morale of the Service, and will make it an even more potent force than it is today.

## After the Rise Must Come the Fall\*

S. KALYANARAMAN\*\*

Over the last decade, the waning of the threat of nuclear holocaust has combined with the turn of century-cum-millennium spirit and the emergence of the Internet to produce visions of brave new worlds. Among other phenomena, the state has also been a target of speculation, with many pundits circulating, what Professor André Bèteille has termed, 'exaggerated rumours' of the imminent death of the nation-state. In a significant departure from these enthusiasts, Professor Martin Van Creveld conducts us through a historical tour of the life of the state. Not any 'state', but *the* state that originated in Western Europe and which later, through colonisation, spread to other parts of the world. He, of course, does not make a distinction between states that had existed in various parts of the world prior to their *European discovery* and that which originated in the monarchies of Western Europe during the last 500 years. Instead, he views the state as a new form of government that originated when royal bureaucracies of the West European monarchies began to enforce rules, routinise tax collection, etc. independently of the person of the monarch.

The essential condition for the rise of the European state lay in the feudal order that shaped up in the aftermath of the Western Roman Empire. Its main characteristic was the absence of centralised control in the political realm. The ties that bound the patchwork of principalities and kingdoms were feudal and blood relationships among the ruling class, a common religion, and trade centered on free cities. In contrast to the political sphere, the Catholic Church based in Rome exercised absolute control in the religious realm. The first half of Professor Van Creveld's story is about the 'struggle' of the West European monarchies against the Catholic Church, the Holy Roman Empire, the nobility, and the free cities,

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\**The Rise and Decline of the State*. By Martin Van Creveld (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp 439, Price not indicated, ISBN 0-521-65629-X (Pbx).

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and their ultimate 'triumph' in establishing their supremacy. It is essentially a political history of how governments in Western Europe consolidated and extended their power over society between 1300 and 1945. Professor Van Creveld describes how the bureaucracy was built and information about the domain (maps) and the people (census) was collected; how taxes to meet government expenses were imposed and money was brought under state control; how the state came to monopolise the use of force and maintain order within society through the police and the prison system; about the growth of nationalism and with it the growth in responsibilities of, and advantages to, the state in providing education, health care and other welfare benefits. The latter half of Professor Van Creveld's survey covers the spread of the state to the rest of the world, and how it has been on the decline since 1975.

War has been one of the most important functions of the state. "Had it not been for the need to wage war," Professor Van Creveld asserts, "then the development of bureaucracy, taxation, even welfare services such as education, health, etc. would probably have been much slower. As the record shows, in one way or another all of them were originally bound up with the desire to make people more willing to fight on behalf of their respective states". However since the introduction of nuclear weapons, wars are becoming obsolete. And since "states can develop a strong appeal to the emotions only so long as they prepare for, and wage, war", their ceasing to do so means an inevitable decline in citizen loyalty. The state, on its part, has consequently less need to take interest in providing social goods and welfare to the citizenry, a task that is neither "economically affordable" nor "socially desirable". Many of these formerly state functions are now being carried out by other organisations. Moreover, new technology is causing states to lose power to various non-governmental organisations, which latter are neither territorially based nor endowed with sovereignty. Together, these factors have begun to push the state onto the downside of the "Wheel of Fortune" [picturised on the front cover of the book].

The argument that wars among major powers will not pay and is therefore on the wane has been advanced earlier. One of the

greatest expositions was Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion*, written only a year before Europe began to tear itself apart in the First World War. History, as Voltaire stated, does not repeat itself. But as Barbara Tuchman quipped years ago, 'men always do'! Moreover, the fact remains that it is the possession of nuclear weapons, and demonstration of the ability and willingness to use them, that has bottled up war; neither has the possession of nuclear weaponry reduced reliance on conventional capabilities. If the preparation for, and the threat of, war are thus preconditions for the prevalence of peace, then to argue that war is becoming obsolescent is nothing but an inferential leap.

Professor Van Creveld also describes how the welfare state assumed gigantic proportions in the wake of the Second World War and how these are being gradually pruned since the 1980s. But as he himself acknowledges, this 'retreat from welfare' is simply widening the divide between the rich and poor in several Western countries. This is bound to be especially acute in developing countries, where significant numbers are poor and consequently depend on the state for education, health care, food subsidies, etc. Market forces simply do not have the philanthropic motivation or the ability to generate funds for these purposes; nor is it their goal. Only the state can, and is obligated to, do this, because it is the expression of the will of the people.

The last decade alone witnessed a mushrooming of states; and there are many more peoples who aspire to establish their own states. Of course, the state is bound to change over time, take on new responsibilities and discard old functions. But it is not going to vanish. Bureaucracies continue to flourish, while laws and regulations affecting myriad aspects of life steadily multiply. Thus, though it is difficult to accept Professor Van Creveld's thesis, the book in itself provides a useful history of the origins, growth, and spread of the modern state, and the factors that continue to shape it.

## Reminiscences of a Soldier\*

LT GEN SL MENEZES, PVSM, SC (RETD)

The late author suddenly passed away on 14 November 1999, having just completed the first draft of his autobiography from memory. He was not therefore able to send the final manuscript, possibly fleshed out in greater detail and after rechecking names and units, to a publisher during his lifetime, this latter responsibility devolving on members of his bereaved family. The word 'if' is the central word in life and this autobiography is replete with examples of that. Physically towering in life, his "War Despatches: Indo-Pakistan Conflict 1965" had been a tour de force. In the particular genre of autobiographies of KCIOs/ICOs, the present work stands out, encompassing as it does the complete gamut of experiences that is possible for an officer to have, from a rifle platoon commander to GOC-in-C of an Army Command in war, including his surviving a three-and-a-half year ordeal as a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese.

The first 'if' in the life of the author was inevitably what profession he should join. His father, a doctor in the Jind State Forces, who had served with the Jind Infantry on the North West Frontier and in World War I, wanted his son to become a doctor. He gave such an indication to his father, but then switched later from the pre-medical group in Government College, Lahore, and eventually sat for the entrance examination to the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun, competing with ten thousand aspirants for ten open vacancies and joining in March 1933. His elder brother, Major General Gurbakhsh Singh, had already joined the Jind State Forces. This leads one to the interesting conjecture that if the author had become a doctor in Jind State, which ICO contemporary would have been thrown up as GOC-in-C Western Command in the momentous days of 1965, a huge Army Command that at that time also included what is now the Northern Command.

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\**In the Line of Duty : A Soldier Remembers.* By Lieutenant General Harbakhsh Singh, VrC, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan (New Delhi: Lancer Publishers & Distributors, 2000), pp.440, Rs. 595.00, ISBN 81-7062-106-2.

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The next 'if' in his life was which regiment should he join after passing out second from the IMA in July 1935. He joined the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> Sikhs in July 1936 (after a year's attachment with a British battalion), his company commander in the first two IMA terms being Captain R A Savory of the Sikh Regiment. (There is an interesting denouement about this connection later in 1946, not completely spelt out in the book.) Thus the author was nurtured in the Sikh Regiment and spent much of his service with Sikh troops, ultimately becoming the Colonel of the Regiment as the second successor to General Savory. He had earlier adopted on his own the vow taken by Guru Gobind Singh (and made other Khalsas take at the time of their baptism):

Oh Lord! Grant me this boon that I may never falter from doing good; that when confronted by the enemy in battle I may have no fear of him and that I may be sure of my victory, may my mind be so trained as to dwell upon Thy goodness; and when the last moment of my life should come, may I die fighting in the thick of battle.

This vow was to sustain him during his captivity, after being wounded, with the Japanese, his battalion after a spell on the North-West Frontier having been sent to Malaya in 1940, as also the moral support of his brother Lt Col Gurbakhsh Singh, 1<sup>st</sup> Jind Infantry, a fellow prisoner-of-war with him. The author's first-hand account of the British reverses in Malaya and of his own captivity is illuminating. It says much of his brother's hold on the Jind Infantry that not a single person joined the 'Indian National Army' (INA), an astounding accomplishment in the circumstances of the 1942 surrender in Malaya/Singapore, as neither did the author (despite a subsequent meeting with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose).

His captivity along with his brother inevitably posits another 'if' in his life. As prisoners, they were eventually allotted as working parties to the Japanese Air Force on a captured airfield and thus their captivity was comparatively bearable. They had initially been earmarked to go to Rabaul Island in the Pacific under the Japanese Army, but this had to be countermanded as the shipping meant to take them was not available. 'If' they had been working parties under the Japanese Army on Rabaul Island, or subsequently apparently intended for the "Death" Railway in Siam, possibly the



author would not have survived his captivity; most Indian prisoners of war sent to Rabaul did not. On repatriation to India with beri beri, after the Japanese surrender, though the author does not say so, his brother for his steadfastness, having earlier been appointed an Officer of the British Empire, and as was generally the case, the author would have been appointed an MBE. By circumstance he chose to look up his IMA 'INA' batch mates, then prisoners in the Red Fort, and had thereafter to meet the then Adjutant General Lt Gen R A Savory, Colonel of the Sikh Regiment, to clarify his action. Though not mentioned in the book, his appointment as an MBE must then have been withheld by Gen Savory. 'If' the author had not had the decency to visit his 'INA' contemporaries, in their captivity, he would have been also appointed an MBE along with the other ICO prisoners who had not joined the 'INA'. Aptly his favourite song in childhood and later had been "What is that you hold in your fist. It is my destiny over which I have control." He thus ended World War II still in service as he had not joined the INA, but with recurrent beri beri.

On the premature termination of the Quetta Staff Course, which he had been attending, on account of Partition in 1947, the author, by circumstance, was admitted to the Military Hospital, Ambala, with flu. At this juncture another 'if' occurred in his life. On 29 October 1947, he heard on the Ward radio that Lt Col D Ranjit Rai, OC 1 Sikh, had been killed near Baramulla. Though not yet recovered from his bout of flu, he insisted on being discharged, was flown to Delhi by the IAF, rang up the Deputy Military Secretary offering his services as OC 1 Sikh. His account of the Kashmir operations that he was concerned with, in various appointments, is both evocative and emotive. 'If' he had not insisted on being discharged from the hospital, giving his willingness in writing, and volunteering thereafter to be OC 1 Sikh, would he have been posted to Kashmir. In quick succession from 1 November 1947, he found himself first posted as Deputy Brigade Commander, 161 Infantry Brigade, but then on arrival in Kashmir to be the officiating Brigade Commander, and thus the commander of all the forces in the Valley, i.e. four battalions. He thereafter rivetingly narrates the "shoestring" and 'toothpick' manner" in which the Indian Army fought its first campaign in Kashmir. On a permanent brigade commander arriving,



the author reverted to being the Deputy Commander in command of the forces at Shelatang, which battle was the turning point insofar as the raider's advance on Srinagar was concerned. In a brilliantly planned and executed operation, tactically a minor classic, four miles from Srinagar, the author routed the enemy, who left 472 dead, using two battalions and a troop of armoured cars. The threat to Srinagar was now over. He rightly regrets his Brigade Commander's decision to stop the brigade's advance to Uri instead of going on to Domel and destroying the bridge there. In his view, "Had he done so, ...we would not have had a Kashmir problem at all today". The author also blames the then GOC J & K Force, set up on 8 November 1947, for not insisting on the seizure of the Domel and Kohala bridges, for, had this been done, "the Jammu and Kashmir problem would have been solved once and for all." Thereafter on 22 December, when the officiating OC 1 Sikh was wounded and 1 Sikh was brought back to Srinagar, the author also found himself commanding 1 Sikh, apart from being Srinagar Garrison Commander and the Deputy Brigade Commander. Though not directly concerned operationally, he rightly very much regrets the unsuccessful efforts made to relieve the gallant State Force garrison at Skardu. As is known this garrison held out for some six months and was then told to surrender. Not mentioned by the author but well known at the time, was the intercepted enemy wireless message, "all women raped, and all Sikhs killed". The failure to relieve Skardu over several months till May 1948 is a permanent blot on the prowess of the Indian Army, for which we are suffering even today, eg, in the form of the July 1999 "invasion" from Skardu into the Kargil sector.

His account of the operations of 1 Sikh with him as OC, in Handwara-Kupwara-Trehgam-Drangmulla in the months February-April is enthralling. Here again another 'If'. A troop of armoured cars arrived 12 hours too late at Handwara, thus allowing an Azad Kashmir battalion to escape. In May 1948, Tithwal was gallantly captured by 163 Inf Bde, with the author officiating as the Brigade Commander, despite numerous logistical difficulties and constraints. In June 1948 he handed over to the permanent Brigade Commander who had now returned, but he himself came down with a further attack of beri beri and was posted as Deputy

Commandant of the IMA. Thereafter from April 1949 he was head of an Inter Services Scientific Team in J & K for a year, whereafter he was posted as Brigadier General Staff, HQ Western Command, and then in 1953 as Commander 19 Inf Bde; 1956 saw him as Director Infantry, and then in 1957 on the Imperial Defence College course.

After commanding an infantry division in Punjab, he was rushed to command 4 Corps in the 1962 operations, on the then Corps Commander Lt Gen B M Kaul, falling ill and being evacuated to Delhi. In the event, his command of 4 Corps was only to be of a week's duration as Lt Gen Kaul was able to prevail on the then Prime Minister, his kinsman, to restore the command of 4 Corps to Kaul with the sequential sad reverses at Se La and Bomdi La. Having myself commanded 4 Corps later, in the Seventies, I am convinced that Se La and Bomdi La would not have fallen if the author had been permitted to continue in command of 4 Corps. But that was not to be, with the political interference of the day and he was thereupon moved to Headquarters 33 Corps, then being moved to the Siliguri area.

Then follows the encapsulation of the 1965 Indo-Pakistan operations in Punjab, and Jammu and Kashmir, covered in detail in the 1991 publication *War Despatches: Indo-Pakistan Conflict 1965*, which cannot be bettered.

This enthralling autobiography abundantly establishes the author's tactical prowess in Kashmir in 1948, and his strategic vision in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, in 1965. The author started the Introduction to this book with a quotation from Bismarck as being the purpose of writing this autobiography, "People like to learn from their own experiences; I like to learn from other people's experiences". One could conclude with another quotation from Bismarck, after reading this autobiography, "Policy cannot succeed through speeches...and songs; it can only be carried out through blood and iron." As is apparent, Lt Gen Harbakhsh Singh survived his captivity and succeeded in war due to his iron will in the service of his country, but also sadly entailing the sacrifice of much blood by his soldiers, to whom this book is dedicated. To use a media term, in describing the operations of the Indian Army, most talk the talk; the author actually walked the talk.

## Short Reviews of Recent Books

### **The Construction of Nationhood – Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism.**

*By Adrian Hastings (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 233, £ 13.95, ISBN 0-521-62544-0.*

The enigma of what constitutes a nation still eludes us. Is it a coagulation of people with similar language, culture or ethnicity or a conglomeration of these that comprise the nation state. Professor Adrian Hastings, an eminent theologian of University of Leeds, attempts to provide an historical perspective on the emergence of the nation state. Questioning the accepted premise that this is a post modernist Eighteenth Century phenomenon, Hastings argues that nations and nationalism are of medieval origin.

Providing England as the prototype of the nation state of the medieval era, the author goes on to elaborate various factors that influenced emergence of strong English nationalism supplemented by the Church and literature which assimilated alien Normans into its nationhood. The early emergence of English nationhood, claims the author, contributed to British dominance of the World from the Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries, with an all pervasive English identity designated by language and parliamentary culture spreading awareness across the World, while other European states remained a multitude of unprogressive, dynastic states.

Explaining relationship between ethnicity and nationhood, in the light of territoriality, language, literature and religion in Western Europe, the Southern Slav States and Africa, the author concludes that African nationalism has been nonexistent except where it has been ethnically based, linguistically held together and biblically driven. The Bible as literature emerged as a common bond of nationhood just as the Bhagvad Gita in India, which spread from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and Karachi to Kohima. The author calls for retention of ethnic identity in nation state as preservative to ensure cultural diversity and closer human fulfilment rather than that achieved through mono culturalism and also underlines the universalistic nature of Islam as a religion leading to a *jihad* approach cutting across national borders. A useful study on background of nationhood to be read by the historically inclined.

*Colonel Rahul K Bhonsle*

**The Politics of Strategic Adjustment : Ideas, Institutions and Interests.**  
*Ed by Peter Trubowitz, E O Goldman and E Rhodes (New York : Colombia University Press, 1999), pp.322, Price not indicated, ISBN 0-231-11075-8 (pbk)*

Strategic adjustment implies redefining security objectives when established ends no longer bear relation to evolving circumstances. The end of Cold War necessitated strategic adjustment in the United States, faced with the dilemma of justifying continued defence expenditure of a quarter trillion dollars annually despite reduced external threats. The collective cognition of a team of renowned political and defence analysts attempt to rationalise this enigma in a workshop conducted by the Social Science Research Council. The purpose of the Workshop was to study the post Cold War strategic adjustment with a view to determining the future course of American grand strategy. The dialectic discourse during the workshop has been published in the form of a series of essays which develop the principal themes; influence of domestic compulsions and political processes on strategic choice and the critical impact of institutional structure and ideas in the process of strategic adjustment.

The main features driving strategic change are identified as ideas and culture, regional politics, media and public opinion, public influence and institutional processes such as organisational learning and doctrinal evolution in the armed forces. These posits are analysed against the backdrop of strategic adjustment during the various defining periods of change in American history leading to strategic revisionism such as the 1890's, when the United States entered the vortex of global power politics abjuring isolationism, the 1920's and 1930's, the inter-war period , late 1940's and the post Cold War era.

The authors conclude, what perceptive international relations theorists knew all along, that security policies of nations are shaped by domestic politics, political ideologies, state structure and societal interests and not by the cold logic of national interests. This is particularly true of nations as the United States, which has been insulated from geographical threats to its mainland throughout its history. Thus the U S will continue to rationalise its future strategic adjustment based on a variety of internal factors viewed through varied frames of references rather than from tangible external threats. The essays denote the perceptual acuity so typical of Western scholars and highlight the depth of strategic debate in America, which is a bottom up evaluation of national priorities based on democratic aspirations of the people. In comparison, Indian strategic thought appears to be driven largely by the interests of the elite. A study of the book should enable our policy makers to evolve a security policy which would represent

genuine interests of the people rather than sustaining hysteria over issues of anachronous historic relevance.

*Colonel Rahul K Bhonsle*

**War : A Matter of Principles.** By Air Marshal David Evans. *RUSI Studies Series* (London : Macmillan Press, 1997), pp. 183, £ 42.50, ISBN 0-333-69916-5.

Reviewing the principles of war, the author deplores the tendency to disregard these principles codified after centuries of accumulated experience of warfare by the British and the American Defence Forces. There are military professionals who dismiss the high-sounding 'principles' as a checklist of possible considerations because they are part of military education now.

A notable quote is of Field Marshal Montgomery of Alamein, in *A History of Warfare*, "By studying the actions and methods of some of the great captains of the past we can learn how the practical side of war was handled in their days. Such study would illustrate the evolution of the art of war and the uniformity of its basic conceptions. Although weapons have become more powerful and the problems of the battlefield have grown more intricate and more complex, nonetheless the art of war is fundamentally the same today as it was in the days of ancient Greece, or when Rome and Carthage joined the battle."

War in progress is now presented to political leaders and the public in almost real time. This creates a situation where political leaders are tempted to make military decisions based on short-term political imperatives without regard to military imperatives or principles. Sun Tzu had appreciated these very dangers of political interference.

The author has detailed the principles of war like 'selection and maintenance of aim, morale, offensive action, security, element of surprise, concentration of force, economy of effort, flexibility, cooperation, administration, simplicity, manoeuvre, timings-tempo and leadership'. The author extends this study to embrace the aspects of leadership and training. The concluding chapter addresses the moral responsibilities of those exercising command of their fellow countrymen and other assigned forces.

This volume is well worth a reading by all officers of the armed forces, and politicians, who are entrusted with taking military decisions. Individuals interested in the study of warfare will find this volume interesting and thought provoking.

*Colonel P K Vasudeva (Retd)*

**The Sanctions Paradox : Economic Statecraft and International Relations.** By Daniel W Drezner (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 342, Price not indicated, ISBN 0-521-64415-1.

Economic sanctions have emerged as a powerful tool of diplomatic coercion in the international arena. How effective are sanctions is, however, a matter of debate. Daniel Drezner has attempted to solve the riddle of payoffs through sanctions by providing a theoretical construct for understanding the politics of economic sanctions. Using Games Theory the author provides statistical models for examining the enigma of sanctions through analysis of the conflict expectations model, making two predictions for success of economic sanctions: economic coercion should generate more substantial concessions when the gap in the opportunity costs of deadlock is greater; target will concede more if conflict expectations are low.

Set in four parts, Part I establishes the theory of economic coercion. Examining a surfeit of cases the author brings out relative models of economic coercion with gains and reputation gaining priority over economically evident inputs in terms of costs. Part II examines the specifics of economic coercion employed by Russia over the breakaway Soviet Republics. Russia needed to use economic coercion to exercise a degree of control over the newly independent states with a view to protect its larger strategic interests including control of nuclear weapons. Thirty nine incidents of Russian coercion with the NIS are subjected to multi variety statistical analyses and Boolean analysis by the author to establish the veracity of the hypothesis. In Part III a case study of nuclear non proliferation vis a vis U S pressure on North/South Korea is carried out to establish that aid is a better tool for policy adaptation rather than sanctions. The author's conclusion that despite the rigorous analysis carried out variables in international relations prevent generalisation, and states will continue to use sanctions as a tool for lack of other options, hoping that it will succeed in bringing about desired political changes, is apt. An useful study on use of economic sanctions as a tool for implementation of foreign policy.

Colonel Rahul K Bhonsle

**Security Peace and Honour.** By Brigadier Darshan Khullar (Manas Publications, 2000), pp 232, Rs. 595.00, ISBN 81-7049-084-7.

The book takes an irreverent look at the Indian Union since independence. The author has critically examined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a bold and free manner. The



author has focussed on many a problem facing India, in eight chapters; the hypocrisy of the contemporary India, the threats to Indian security, achievements and failures of the Indian Prime Ministers from Nehru to Vajpayee, the population explosion, corruption, poverty, the state of sports, religion, the Hindu-Muslim divide, and the legacies of the British Raj.

The author has not spared anyone responsible for the mess that India is in today. He is hyper critical of Nehru for his Kashmir policy, Indira Gandhi for Operation *Blue Star*, and emergency, Rajiv Gandhi for Bofors and Atal Behari for handling the IAC hijacking case. The author has given his suggestions to sort out the maladies confronting our country. They may not be acceptable to the readers and decision makers as there are many internal and external pressures with socio, economic and political facets. The readers will however appreciate the love of the soldier for his motherland and definitely the thought provoking ideas for activating changes in our system.

A bold book and a pleasure to read.

Colonel Narendra Kumar Tewari (Retd)

**Dragon Fire : The Realistic and Gripping Novel of the Next War.** By Humphrey Hawksley (London : Macmillan, 2000), pp. xvi, 365, £ 9.99, ISBN 0-333-78595-9.

Humphrey Hawksley is well known to millions of people through his BBC broadcasts from Asia and China. He is the co-author, with Simon Holberton, of *Dragon Strike :The Millennium War* and two internationally acclaimed thrillers, *Ceremony of Innocence* and *Absolute Measures*.

*Dragon Fire* is a Novel written after conducting interviews with experts involved in the scenario described – that of hypothetical six-day, three-way (Pakistan-India-China) nuclear war. At 0500 on Thursday, 3 May 2007, a lone Antonov-32 transport flies over the Himalayas and approaches the Tibetan capital, Lhasa. Its destination is the notorious Drapchi prison, where some of the Tibetan religious leaders are being held. The aircraft's loading bay is lowered. The sky is filled with mushroom-gray parachutes. In a few minutes troops of the People's Republic of China are fighting the invaders. To the West, Pakistani multi-role combat aircraft cross the Line of Control to raise their flag on Indian territory. Suddenly the much dreaded India versus China and Pakistan war begins. Nuclear arsenals are being readied... The US, Europe and Japan threaten China, but Russia warns of retaliation should they strike. The conflict moves to a horrifying, but credible, climax when

China defies world opinion to begin a nuclear war against India. It is called *Operation Dragon Fire*. The aftermath of the Operation is appalling. China emerges the winner through blackmail and brutality; Pakistan is virtually wiped out and is run by interim UN protectorate supported by the Army. India is traumatised and devastated; it would take years to limp back to normalcy.

This is indeed an explosive thriller with the quality of a best-selling fiction; there are some real-life scenarios. The author succeeds in his mission of fictionalising facts and presenting a horrifying picture of a nuclear war that no one is keen to witness.

I R Kumar

**Gun Barrel Politics : Party-Army Relations in Mao's China.** By Fang Zhu (Colorado : Westview Press, 1998), pp. 274, \$ 75.00, ISBN 0-8133-3456-X (hardcover).

Fang Zhu, through his extensive research of predominantly Chinese sources (both written records as also personal interviews, including that of Lin Biao's daughter Lin Doudou in 1996), has provided a tantalising comparative analysis of the various prevalent methods in vogue for the civilian control of the military, including Huntington's 'liberal model' of military control through professionalism as opposed to the Maoist model of 'symbiosis' (or two-way penetration of the party by the military and vice versa) with secondary emphasis on military professionalism. Thus the Chinese military doctrine has always professed a synthesis of political loyalty/participation and military effectiveness, leading to alternating appointment of military officers on political and military assignments, thereby making any notion of military intervention in national affairs policy totally irrelevant. Although the author has confined his analysis to the period upto 1976 when Mao died, as per his conclusions much of the civil-military dualism of the Maoist era is still evident in present day China under Jiang Zemin, although with an increased emphasis on enhancing military professionalism. Jiang Zemin has over the past few years tried hard to court the powerful PLA to make up for his lack of military background, unlike Mao and Deng, by allowing traditional PLA involvement in formulating national policy. This duality of the Chinese system has important implications for the global security environment especially the Asia Pacific region and has to be well understood by our politicians, bureaucrats and military officers who regularly engage in negotiations with the Chinese civil and PLA establishments.

This book provides us important, albeit indirect, insight into the possible psyches of the military elites in some of our neighbouring countries

where they are forever on the lookout for methods to permanently institutionalise the predominance of the military in their national policy formulation structures. It also has lessons for us, who have drifted to the other extreme of having put in place an almost complete divorce between the military and the national policy formulation bodies, which cannot but be detrimental in the long run.

Those of us who wish to embark on serious research or writing would find it encouraging that this book is the outcome of extensive research by the author at Hongkong and Beijing, fully funded by the American Council of Learned Society (ACLS), which does periodically accept applications for special grants for relevant research projects.

*Colonel J M Singh (Retd)*

**The Guerrilla Dynasty : Politics and Leadership in North Korea.** By Adrian Buzo (Boulder, Colo : Westview Press, 1999), pp. 323, Rs. 934.00, ISBN 0-8133-3659-7.

The Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues to attract world attention and generates regional and international tension through its ongoing confrontation with South Korea, its nuclear weapons programme, the collapse of its economy and its obdurate refusal to reform core state policies despite severe economic and diplomatic setbacks.

The author has presented an accessible and up-to-date account of North Korea's political, economic, and foreign policy since its foundation, with particular emphasis on the period 1980-1997. While day-to-day commentary and media coverage tend to highlight North Korea's reputation for the bizarre and its highly dangerous behaviour, and emphasises that its internal and external policies are dysfunctional and counter productive, the book on the contrary presents an image of major North Korean State policies as being highly consistent over an extended period of time.

The author introduces the readers to the history of the DPRK, the life of its people, their career, and the political institution of DPRK, the period of tyranny, nationalism, the signs of reforms and the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. Charismatic leadership more often than not becomes increasingly incompatible with the needs of time and modernisation, which has been proved beyond doubt.

A useful book for those keen to know about the rise and fall of Korea especially the Guerilla dynastic rule.

*Colonel P K Vasudeva (Retd)*

**Unfinished Peace : Report of the International Commission on the Balkans.** By Leo Tindeman (Washington DC. : Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996), pp.197, \$14.95, ISBN 0-87003-118-X.

In 1914 the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace launched an International Commission to conduct an on-the-scene investigation into the causes and conduct of the Balkans Wars of 1912 and 1913. 'Unfinished Peace' is a Report of a similar investigation carried out in 1945 by another International Commission created jointly by the Carnegie Endowment and the Aspen Institute along with several European and American foundations. In addition to investigating the causes and conduct of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Commission was given the mandate of reporting on the situation in the Balkans and formulating long term measures to contribute to the establishment of a durable peace in the region.

This report is a critical and objective study of the causes of the bitter wars between Serbia and Croatia and the three-way ethnic strife between Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Muslims in Bosnia - Herzegovina. Ethnic strife between Muslims and Christians is perhaps understandable. But what seems odd is the bitter mutual conflict between nationalities of common Slavic origin and subscribing to the same Christian religion. The Report does not explain why the United States of America should be at such odds with the Serbs, who had fought on the Allied side during World War II. Perhaps the answer lies in United States' prime interest in the Middle East oil that make it favour the Muslim communities in Bosnia, Kosovo and Albania. The infringement of human rights is, as so often, the convenient excuse for taking sides.

Besides covering the problems of the breakaway successors to Yugoslavian State, the Commission has also examined the other principal zones of tension that obtain in the Balkans powder keg. The Report of the International Commission is an authoritative examination of the Balkans problems, and will be of immense interest to scholars studying the political situation in the area.

*Major General Samir Sinha, PVSM (Retd)*

**Concord and Conflict : The United States and Russia, 1867-1914.** By Norman E Saul (Kansas : University Press of Kansas, 1996), pp.654, £ 43.95, ISBN 0-7006-0754-4.

A voluminous book of 654 pages, it is indeed intimidating for a casual reader and daunting for a reviewer. It, however, is not quite as bad for the academic and the research scholar, who could well consider it worth his

while poring over it and discovering that, while the USA and Russia each had their own way, the average Russian and the American were quite fond of each other.

Norman Saul seems to have had the time and funding available to him to have gone plundering the bottomless resources with profligacy unmatched right throughout the six hundred odd pages of close type. Readers who are unlikely to have both these assets in any great abundance or in any appreciable measure, would do well only to browse through the three and a half pages of conclusions. It would be a revelation for most to know that this half century or so, which the author has so painstakingly researched from previously untouched secondary sources, was highly metamorphosical and portentous in Russo-American interaction. Of particular import should be the second chapter titled "War and Technology, 1870s". It deals with the Rosenstrauss Case, the Jeannette Disaster, the Berdanka, Russo-Turkish War, the Balkan problems, the North Pacific, agriculture, machine and tools, mechanical training, the Centennial Exhibition, information and military exchanges, including the visit of General & Mrs Ulysses Grant. Undoubtedly the book will be an axiomatic cloistered vault for researchers for many years to come; its range is truly astronomical.

For the sombre and staid students of US-Russian relations, this book propounds hundreds of possible subjects for deeper erudite study and scrutiny. They may even be tempted, for all any one knows; to ruminate the author's *Distant Friends : The United States and Russia, 1763-1867*, and another tome that Saul has, yet again, on drawing board!

*Lieutenant Colonel A K Sharma (Retd)*

**Compromising Palestine : A Guide to Final Status Negotiations.** By Aharon Klieman (New York : Colombia University Press, 2000), pp.984, £25.00, ISBN 0-231-11789-2

One of the most intractable problems in the violence riddled Middle East, which has been defying solution over the past sixty years or more, is that of Palestine – between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews. Professor Klieman of the Tel-Aviv University, provides an invaluable guide to not only understanding of this long-drawn conflict, but also a possible approach for its resolution. In fact its concluding chapter is a remarkably accurate forecast of the course of negotiations sponsored by President Clinton at Camp David.

The author narrates how the Palestinian Arabs, who always laid claims to the whole of Palestine as their inalienable historic right, seem to be coming round to a position of accepting the State of Israel and their share

of Palestine. The Palestinian objective, however, remains that of obtaining an independent State for themselves. This, the author states, can only be achieved by a fair partition of Palestine between the Israelis and the Palestinians notwithstanding the constraints of security, economics, and the just sharing of water and other meager resources that the division of this small country would inevitably involve. He has objectively laid out the case for both parties to the conflict, giving due consideration to their vital concerns and the extent to which these could be modified or reconciled in order to achieve a just, stable and lasting peace.

A major stumbling block in their negotiations is the claim of both the parties to the holy city of Jerusalem. That these claims are based on historical, religious and traditional grounds further complicate the issues. The author has devoted a whole chapter to the problem of Jerusalem and dealt in considerable detail with the background to the problem. The situation is further compounded by the claims of the various sects of the Christian world for free access to their holy sites in the City and for the safe-keeping of their religious places. The author offers his guide to a just and fair solution. This is a very readable book of great value to scholars interested in this dynamic conflict situation that affects most of the countries in the Middle East.

*Major General Samir Sinha, PVSM (Retd)*

**South Africa and Future of the Non-Aligned Movement.** *Ed by Grey Mills (Johannesburg : The South African Institute of International Affairs, 1998), pp. 67, Price not indicated, ISBN 1-874890-91-9*

This publication is based on the proceedings of a conference organised by The South African Institute of International Affairs. The speakers have discussed the challenge of social and economic imbalances faced by NAM countries, basically poverty and disparity between the haves and have nots and racial discrimination. About 800 million people in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa suffer insufficient and irregular supply of food. The speakers have pointed out the growing realisation of the scope for co-operation among non-aligned countries in the areas of trade, investment and technology transfer to assist the underdeveloped countries. Natarajan Krishnan, a former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, has aptly summarised the "essence of non-alignment as "the autonomy of choice." The movement which gives its members a collective strength to exercise that choice, therefore, has a continuing role to play in a world where "developing countries face fresh challenges and pressures".



The views of the speakers are well presented. It would be of interest to the officials in the Ministry of External Affairs.

*Commodore R P Khanna, AVSM (Retd)*

**The Illegal Drug Trade in Southern Africa ; International Dimensions to a Local Crisis.** (Johannesburg : South African Institute of International Affairs, 1998), pp.185, Price not indicated, ISBN 1-874890-79-X.

The book is the outcome of the project on the illegal drug trade in South Africa undertaken by the South African Institute of International Affairs assisted by International Development Agency of Sweden and the Embassy of the United States of America in Pretoria. The aim of the project was to establish the extent of narcotics trafficking in South Africa, identify, examine and assess state, regional and international measures to suppress this menace and recommend remedial measures.

The author in the introductory chapter states that the greatest security threat which the South African region faces comes not from the spectre of nuclear conflict, nor the likelihood of an armed assault from one of the member states but from the violent crimes caused by drug trade and abuse made easy by weak detection system, underdevelopment, porous borders and rampant corruption. It is regarded as a relatively safe transit to Europe and North America.

The chapter on Nigerian Nexus makes interesting reading. The reviewer of this book was Defence Adviser to High Commissioner for India in Lagos (Nigeria) and can say with authority that although on paper the Nigerian policies were very strict, corruption by the government officials including the law enforcing agencies in fact encouraged the flourishing illegal trade.

The book also examines the efforts by a number of European institutes, mainly the British to reduce drug abuse through education. Although South Africa has taken many steps to curb drug trafficking and consumption including education and information campaigns to deter the youngsters, it has not been very successful. This has been due to lack of qualified personnel and shortage of drug rehabilitation facilities.

A well researched book of interest to the officials engaged in the task of curbing drug trafficking, and the reformers. A good addition to all libraries.

*Commodore R P Khanna, AVSM (Retd)*

**Paths to Conflagration: Fifty Years of Diplomacy and Warfare in Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, 1778-1828.** By Mayoury Ngaosyvathn and Pheuiphanh Ngaosyvathn. *A Southeast Asia Programme (SEAP) Publication* (New York : Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 270, Price not indicated, ISBN 0-87727-723-0

The book narrates a watershed event in the history of mainland Southeast Asia. The 1827 conflagration left a lasting scar on the soul and spirit of the people in the region. Till this day, when tensions flare up, people from both shores of the Mekong River tend to refer back to it, and virtually every book on the history or politics (or both) of Thailand or Laos covers it to some extent. It is a conflict characterised by a matrix of divisiveness.

Early in this remarkable book there appears an apt Nineteenth Century Western missionary's judgment with reference to Laos, "None of the nations of Asia has attracted so little attention as this numerous race".

The authors have opened a field of historical study that previously had been closed. They have blended an enormous range of material from a formidable array of languages. The book rests heavily upon the rich archives of the Thai Government and the authors' use of widely scattered materials in French, English, Thai, Vietnamese and from Laos. These have been beautifully woven into their narrative. Here is an authentic history of Laos-Thailand relationship. Readers may feel that the authors have a tendency to interpret Laos' documents positively and Thai documents negatively. There is considerable dwelling on the issue of loss of the Emerald Buddha to Siam in 1778, but no explanation as to its whereabouts before it came to Laos, in the Sixteenth Century, is given.

This is a readable, well-crafted book with an easy flow of language and narrative on the long-standing question of modern Laos's consciousness.

Colonel P K Vasudeva (Retd)

**Valour to the Fore : A History of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion – The Maratha Light Infantry 1800 - 2000.** By Major General E D'Souza, PVSM (Mumbai : ARB Communications, 2000), pp 338, Rs. 550.00

This is the second book written by the author on the history of Marathas, the earlier one being on the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the same Regiment. It is not common for infantry battalions to have their histories written. Normally, a Regiment's history encapsulates the histories of battalions.

When one considers, however, that the accounts of these Maratha battalions span more than two centuries of events one realises that regimental histories will find it difficult to do justice to such battalions.

Going through the book one senses this to be a labour of love. What seeps through is the spirit of the unit and the joyful and willing contribution of officers, both British and Indian, and of Maratha JCOs, who have helped the author to piece together this eminently readable narrative.

What would strike the reader, however, is the performance of this Battalion during the Burma Campaign of World War II, at the battle of Sangshak in March 1944, when it stood firm against the Japanese thrust to India. For eight vital days it stemmed the Japanese advance although they were continuously under attack. The courageous stand by the Marathas at Sangshak helped turn the tide of war in Burma.

General D' Souza has not only contributed significantly to the military history of India but has also blazed a new trail in giving the Army a historical narrative different from the stereotyped histories of the past. He has not only made this history easy on the eye with pictures, illustrations, and anecdotes but has also taken a leap into the information age by making the history available on compact disc (CD) as a multimedia presentation using Internet Explorer as a browser.

This history, the first of its kind, will probably set a new trend in the writing of military history. As such, it is much ahead of its time.

*Major General Ian Cardozo (Retd)*

**Stalingrad.** By Antony Beevor (London : Penguin, 1998), pp. 2396, £ 12.99, ISBN 0-14-024985-0.

This highly acclaimed book on the epic battle of Stalingrad in World War II has been commended by military historian John Keegan, and matinee idol Dirk Bogard. The magnitude of Stalingrad and sheer scale of blood-letting, what many military historians see as the turning point of that war, are spectacularly captured. The story unfolds like an epic novel. It is, therefore, un-put-downable. In retelling the saga of this battle, Beevor combines the soldier's understanding of war's realities with the recital methodology of a *littérateur*, enabling the reader to look into the very face of combat as it were.

The author describes Op Barbarossa (the drive of Nazi Germany's mechanized phalanx in to Russia in June-December 1941), Op Blue (the

German advance on to Stalingrad in the summer of 1942) the assault on Stalingrad of September 1942, Op Uranus (Marshal Zhukov's trap of November 1942), Op Winter Storm (the German winter operation in December 1942), Op Little Saturn (the Soviet counter thrusts of December 1942), and Op Ring (the Soviet onslaught on and encirclement of the German Sixth Army in January 1943) in a masterly way. The main idea behind his effort appears to have been to bring out the feelings of troops on both sides. In this he has succeeded admirably. He has consulted primary sources including discussions with war veterans or the descendants of the survivors on both sides. The access now, to the war-time daily dispatches sent out from the Stalingrad Front to the head the political department of the Red Army, has further lent credence to the author's proclivity to painstaking research and has led to the overwhelming authenticity of his efforts. The author describes not only heroics, but also seditious behaviour like desertions, crossing over to the enemy, pusillanimity, ineptitude, self-inflicted wounds, anti-Soviet agitation and even insobriety. The Battle of Stalingrad remains such a conjecturally charged and consequential subject that the last word will not be heard for many years. Those who can get a copy of this magnificent treatise, of the bloodiest, grimmest and mortifying carnage of the Second World War, should hold on to it as a collector's item.

*Lieutenant Colonel A K Sharma (Retd)*

**"Mau Mau From Below".** By Greet Kershaw (Oxford UK : James Currey Ltd., 1997), pp. 354, £ 14.95, ISBN 0-8214-1555-1.

Though painted in various hues, depending upon the ideology of the artist, the Mau(s) Mau(s) - 'the greedy eaters'/ forest-fighters/ insurgents - Movement was essentially a struggle of the landless, oppressed and poor native Kikuyu of Kenya against their white colonial masters.

The author (ess) endeavours to investigate why Mau Mau had come to pass and what had inspired those that joined it and those that had not. The study also shows how ordinary people lived through a period of great change and, for many, anguish, and how they perceived their lot. Arranged in eight chapters, the book provides historical and modern material about consanguinity between villagers. Footnotes give additional anthropological and historical statistics; at times they even tend to juxtapose provincial and recognised information. Some appendices list data, which is central to the conclusions of the main text. *Mau Mau From Below* allows the reader to enter more profoundly into the moral world of Kikuyu responsibility and rectitude at a time of crises than erudite inquiry has fathomed ever before. This is because Greet Kershaw; who has lived amongst the Kikuyu during the emergency; followed the *lingua franca*, and appreciated their sensibilities,

and thus obtained ingeniously valid ethnographic perceptiveness into the merits, apprehensions and aspirations of Kikuyu society and thus of the motivation of the Kikuyu action. These insights run counter to the conjectures of the liberally inclined urban/western mind.

To start with, an introduction to the mindset of the Kikuyu is elaborated. The conflict, since the Nineteenth Century, over land-holdings is discussed next. Being one of the tribe implied having a right to ownership of land. Status in and standing in society depended on the degree that one could exercise this right. Being deprived of this precipitated the Mau Mau movement. The role of the *Krika* famine, immigration to areas cleared of forest for agriculture and the increasing divide between the haves and have nots is ascribed to the centralised political system in which access to land and decision making were constrained. This period ended with another famine – *Ng 'aragu ya Ruraya* – with a heavy loss of life. The colonial period is full of incidents of land-related animosity. Three chapters deal with the native resistance to European colonialism according to the Kikuyu tenets and formulae. Many hazarded joining the movement only on the belief that the Europeans would flee soon. The penultimate chapter describes the growing association of the landless and the land poor with the Mau Mau in the hope of ending their dire destitution by evicting the Whites from the land that they had usurped. Interesting to note that overthrowing a colonial government and replacing it with one headed by Jomo Kenyatta, was not their principle urging. The Mau Mau did not hold him in high esteem because he lacked political astuteness. Despite this, the government considered him the main leader of the rebellious Mau Mau. He was arrested. Strong and high-handed measures were adopted to deal with the 'oath-takers'/insurgents, to coerce them into confessions. These eventually lead to the drunken Marige and Lari carnages. In spite of untold anguish on both sides during the Mau Mau uprising, it was the Kikuyu resistance to the colonial government that carried the day.

A fine exposé of Kikuyuian value-system, fears, struggles, religious and social rites, and economic profile. It should be a treat for the scholar of African studies.

*Lieutenant Colonel A K Sharma (Retd)*

**Quest for the Jade Sea : Colonial Competition Around an East African Lake.** By *Pascal James Imperato* (Colorado : Westview Press, 1998), pp. 332, \$ 49.00, ISBN 0-8133-2791-1

*Quest for the Jade Sea* is primarily an account of the explorers, naturalists and big game hunters, who travelled to Lake Rudolf during the later part of the Nineteenth Century. Also known as Lake Turkana, it has

salt water and is 150 miles long and 20 miles wide; it is located in northern Kenya, near the Ethiopian border, in Africa. It is popularly known as Jade Sea for the greenish hue of its waters.

Most of the expeditions were sent from the East, many of them to locate the source of River Nile; the one who could dominate the source could also influence Egypt. The Americans, Chanler and Smith in particular, went in primarily for sports and scientific discovery. So much so that they financed their expeditions themselves, unlike others who had the backing of Royal Geographic Society or their own monarchs. Interestingly, even Gaekwad of Baroda backed a scientific expedition to Somaliland, in 1899, for collecting Natural History specimens for the Baroda State Museum. Notwithstanding the purpose of these expeditions, the spirit of adventure displayed by the explorers stands out right through. Be they agents of larger colonial designs, soldiers intent on promoting their military careers, or explorers who wished to advance scientific knowledge, the leaders of these expeditions have left behind not only fascinating episodes of their experiences and discoveries but also parts of larger story of colonial competition around Lake Rudolf. Although the British, Italians, French, Russians and Ethiopians were the main contenders for the lake, its colonial fate was ultimately decided by Great Britain and Ethiopia.

This is a splendid book. Meticulously researched, it is an absorbing account of adventure. Written in a lucid style, without recourse to sentimentality or emotion, some readers may find the account tedious in parts and not written with panache. But this is precisely the book's strength : a straightforward account of an unfamiliar phase of imperialism in Africa.

Recommended for unit and formation libraries for general reading.

*Major General Yatindra Pratap*

**Mother Was A Gunner's Mate : World War II in the Waves.** By Josette Dermody Wingo (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1994), pp. 234, Price not indicated, ISBN 1-55750-960-3

This is an enthralling first-hand account of the day-to-day life of the women who enlisted in the US Navy during World War II in a spirit of patriotic fervour and adventure. The author gives a real life picture of the service in Navy, code of discipline, sense of pride, the demands of uniform and their response to the call of duty. It is a captivating account made spicy with episodes of the youthful pranks, fun and frolic, escapades, homesickness, broken hearts and the spirit of camaraderie.

*Major General L S Lehl, PVSM, Vrc(Retd)*



## **Additions to the USI Library for the Quarter - Ending September 2000**

(The books reviewed in April-June 2000 issue have been added to the Library during this quarter but not shown in this list)

### **BIOGRAPHY**

1. Khanduri, CB  
Brig **Field Marshal KM Cariappa: A Biographical Sketch.** Delhi, Dev Publications, 2000, Rs.295.00, ISBN 81-87577-02-9

### **ECONOMY**

2. Burstein, D &  
Arne De Keijzer **Big Dragon: China's Future What it Means for Business, the Economy and the Global Order.** New York, Simon & Schuster, 2000, \$ 25.00, ISBN 0-684-80316-X

### **INDIA**

3. Yamanouchi, T **India through Japanese Eyes.** New Delhi, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2000, Rs.600.00, ISBN 81-207 - 2288-4
4. Vohra, S **Twentieth Century India.** Delhi, Indian Publishers Distributors, 2001, Rs. 250.00, ISBN 81-7341-180-8

### **INDIA - PAKISTAN**

5. Talbot, Ian, **India and Pakistan: Inviting the Nation.** London: Hodder Headling Group, 2000, £ 19.99, ISBN 0-340-70633-3

### **INFO - TECH**

6. Vittal, N  
S Mahalingam **Information Technology: India's Tomorrow.** New Delhi, Manas Publications, 2001, Rs.495.00, ISBN 81-7049-119-3

### **ISLAM**

7. Eaton, Richard M. **Essays on Islam and Indian History.** New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2000, Rs.595.00, ISBN 019565114-6

8. Ahmad, Zafar

**Islam and Muslims in South Asia.** Delhi, Tarun Offset, 2000, Rs.450.00, ISBN 81-7273-037-3

#### ISRAEL

9. Kett, M

**National Security : The Israeli Experience** London, Praeger Publishers, 2000, \$ 55.00, ISBN 0-275-96812-X

#### MANAGEMENT

10. Seth, SC

**Managing Development for Future: A Study in Transition (Vol. 1&2).** New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 2001, Rs.1600.00, ISBN 81-212-0678-2

#### REPORTS

11. World Development  
Report 2000-2001

**Attacking Poverty.** New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, Rs.410.00, ISBN 0-19-521129-4

12. Government of India

**Economic Survey 1999-2000.** Rs. 200.00

13. Jain, N K

**Report of the Eleventh Finance Commission For 2000 – 2005: As presented in the August House, The Lok Sabha by The Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri Yashwant Sinha on 27th July, 2000 (Under the Chairmanship of Prof. A.M. Khusro).** Delhi, Akalank Publications, 2000, Rs.300.00

#### NUCLEAR ISSUES ROCKET PROGRAMMES

14. Thomas Raju GC  
and A Gupta.

**India's Nuclear Security.** New Delhi, Vistaar Publications, 2000, Rs.595.00 ISBN 81-7036-980-8

15. Raj, G

**Reach for the Stars: The Evolution of India's Rocket Programme.** New Delhi, Viking, 2000, Rs. 395.00, ISBN 0-670-89950-X

**REGIMENTAL HISTORY – GURKHA**

16. Dixit, M                      **Come Tomorrow: A Story about Gurkhas and their Land.** New Delhi, Adarsh Books, 2000, Rs.150.00, ISBN 81-87138-16-5

**SOUTH ASIA**

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(Estd. 1870)

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